



Australian Government



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF MARINE SCIENCE



Annual Report

2023 – 2024

Disclaimer

The research reported herein is based on early analyses of complex datasets and should not be considered definitive in all cases. Institutions or individuals interested in all consequences or applications of the Australian Institute of Marine Science's research are invited to contact the Chief Executive Officer at the Townsville address below.

For additional copies of this report, please phone AIMS on (07) 4753 4444, write to us at the Townsville address or email media@aims.gov.au.

This report, along with a range of other information about AIMS, is available online at www.aims.gov.au.

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The Australian Institute of Marine Science acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and sea on which we work. We recognise the unique relationships and enduring cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to land and sea, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

We particularly recognise the Traditional Owners of the land on which our main laboratory and office bases are located: the Bindal and Wulgurukaba peoples in Townsville, the Larrakia people in Darwin, the Noongar people in Perth and the Ngunnawal people in Canberra. We also recognise and pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are Traditional Owners of the areas of our marine science operations across tropical northern Australia.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons should be aware that this document might contain images of people who have passed away since publication.



23 September 2024

The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for the Environment and Water
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

On behalf of the Council of the Institute of Marine Science (as the accountable authority of the Australian Institute of Marine Science — AIMS), we have pleasure in presenting our annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024. The report is forwarded to you in accordance with section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

This report provides information so that you, the Parliament of Australia, and users of AIMS' research outputs can make an informed judgement about AIMS' performance during the 2023–24 financial year.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972* and in accordance with section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

On behalf of the Council, the Chair approved the content of the *AIMS Annual Report 2023–24* on 16 September 2024.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Woods".

Dr Elizabeth Woods OAM
Council Chair
Australian Institute of Marine Science

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Selina Stead".

Prof Selina Stead
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Institute of Marine Science

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Part 1: Overview

The Year in Review: Report from the Council Chair

This past year has been characterised by a “changing of the guard” and a smooth leadership transition.

Over the past year there have been changes in the composition of the AIMS Council with the departure at the end of his term of Dr Thomas Barlow and the appointment of three new members: Patricia Kelly (from 6 July 2023), Stephen Duffield (from 13 December 2023) and Professor Peter Steinberg (from 1 January 2024). These three councillors come from a variety of backgrounds and will bring strength and experience to guide AIMS’ governance and strategic direction. I also welcome Dr Cass Hunter, an Indigenous social ecological researcher, as advisor to our Council.

After six years at the helm as AIMS Chief Executive Officer Dr Paul Hardisty retired, and during the six months of transitional leadership from Basil Ahyick we conducted a global recruitment for a new CEO. In February we welcomed the arrival of AIMS’ new CEO, Professor Selina Stead. Selina is a proven leader and high achiever in marine science with expertise in coral reef ecosystems, aquaculture, and fisheries. She has a strong background in environmental governance and science policy, and with her depth of experience in research and management, will ensure AIMS continues to deliver important science for the nation.

Selina joined AIMS at a time when tropical marine ecosystems in Australia and the world are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This was exemplified by her arrival during a Townsville cyclone in a summer where the Great Barrier Reef would experience its most widespread mass bleaching event recorded to date. Selina led AIMS’ response, guided by previously developed contingency planning and the extensive experience of the AIMS leadership team. This was a major science activity on the Reef and one that will help build the fundamental knowledge to develop end-to-end solutions to help coral reefs resist, adapt to, and recover from, the impacts of our warming climate.

This extensive mass bleaching science effort is an example of how AIMS is responding to national priorities. We continue to deliver Reef monitoring to ensure our stakeholders have the best available information about the Reef’s condition and the impacts from climate change and other stressors.

I’d like to pick out some AIMS research highlights just in the past year:

- AIMS is carrying out world-leading research into how we can help boost coral reefs resilience and adaptation to the rapidly changing environment. In November scientists completed the largest deployment of juvenile corals onto the Great Barrier Reef in a field trial to help fast track reef recovery after disturbances like coral bleaching.
- On Australia’s north-west coast, AIMS began globally significant research to answer fundamental questions regarding blue carbon. In a science collaboration with BHP, we are investigating tropical marine ecosystems to establish if tropical seaweeds can provide a nature-based solution to draw down excess carbon dioxide in our atmosphere.
- During the year we also significantly increased our efforts to work with Traditional Owners and other Indigenous partners to share knowledge and help them to build capability in areas of priority to them. Through the Woppaburra Coral Project we have successfully concluded one of AIMS’ largest science and knowledge-sharing collaborations with Traditional Owners. This work focused on nurturing spawning coral onto Woppaburra sea Country in the Keppel Islands off Rockhampton.

Meeting with stakeholders to understand their science needs and in turn receive their support are key aspects of our work at the AIMS leadership level. Selina and I hosted a Parliamentary Breakfast in Canberra to promote AIMS’ efforts to members of the two houses of parliament, government departments and agencies and ministerial staff.

In 2023 AIMS celebrated the 10th anniversary of the National Sea Simulator. SeaSim enables AIMS to simulate, quantify, and predict the impacts of various stressors on marine and coastal ecosystems. It is an example of how modern, functional laboratories and facilities underpin our world-leading science. The SeaSim expansion, due to be completed in 2025, more than doubles the size of the current facility, providing more space for more projects, and helping to accelerate science to meet future needs, particularly in breeding heat-resilient corals at scale. The expanded facility will support research and development projects such as the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program as well as enabling greater national and international access.

We are also progressing other key science infrastructure including the detailed vessel design for a future replacement of the RV *Cape Ferguson*, which was part of a government funding package announced by the Prime Minister in 2022.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the substantial contributions of Dr Thomas Barlow, who led many important discussions as an AIMS Council member, former CEO Dr Paul Hardisty who left AIMS in July and the capable stewardship of Basil Ahyick as interim CEO, in particular his work preparing AIMS for the mass coral bleaching on the GBR.

I am immensely proud of AIMS and all we have achieved over the past year, made possible by the commitment and support of AIMS' stakeholders, staff, and science partners and collaborators. Together we are delivering outstanding research for the benefit of the nation and our region of the globe.

Dr Beth Woods OAM, AIMS Council Chair

The Year in Review: Report from the CEO

Is it possible to relocate my family from the UK to Australia in less than six weeks to take up the world's top position for a marine biologist? This question arose when opening the official letter, on a cold December morning in England, confirming my appointment as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) from 1 February 2024.

Yes! I'd like to start by saying thank you to all involved in making this timeframe work. The excitement to put over three decades' experience as both an academic researcher and government scientist into practice was immeasurable. Taking the helm of AIMS, home to many of the world's leading scientists committed to improving tropical ocean health, is a once in a lifetime opportunity and it is a privilege to be part of team Australia.

As I complete my seventh month as the CEO, the standout is the commitment and dedication of the extraordinary people who work at AIMS. The breadth and depth of expertise observed in our researchers combined with the first-class facilities and outstanding support provided from our administrative, corporate, engineering, operations, professional and technical teams, underpins AIMS's reputation as a trusted advisor in delivering the best available and independent tropical marine scientific advice.

It is an honour to present this year's Annual Report on behalf of the AIMS team.

In the last year, we have seen the impact climate change is having on reef systems in Australia and around the world. Significant coral bleaching, caused by ocean heat stress, was documented in each of the major ocean basins (Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans) confirming a global mass coral bleaching event in April 2024.

As one of Australia's iconic ecosystems, the Great Barrier Reef continues to be a significant part of the AIMS research effort, and during the past year it was the focus of international attention following a mass bleaching event that was one of the most extensive and serious recorded, with almost half of the 3000 reefs that make up the marine park experiencing more heat stress than ever before recorded.

This mass coral bleaching event, the fifth since 2016, was anticipated, which allowed AIMS to prepare and be ready for its onset. We conducted extensive scientific surveys on the Great Barrier Reef during a mass bleaching. Aerial surveys, done in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, assessed the spatial extent of bleaching on 1000 individual reefs along the length of the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait. Aerial monitoring was complemented by in-water surveys to assess the fine-scale effects of heat stress during the summer months. Teams, working from our two large research vessels, and additional vessels on charter, surveyed tens of thousands of individual corals to determine the effects of the mass bleaching event on coral colonies across different depths and reef habitats.

Across the country in Western Australia the scientific results were very different to those observed on the East coast, influenced by a series of cyclones and storms cooling waters off the Rowley Shoals, and Scott and Ashmore Reefs to avoid a mass bleaching event.

Increasing ocean temperatures place increasing pressure on coral reefs. Our efforts during the lead-up to and peak of the 2024 mass bleaching event helped us to understand how the Reef responds and adapts, so that we can use science to inform future research efforts to help protect reefs from climate change. Such work includes:

- continuing our research to understand the natural capacity of corals and reefs to adapt to warming oceans,
- investigating ways we can enhance corals' ability to resist bleaching, and
- developing methods to scale up and fast track coral recovery.

In terms of climate change mitigation, this year we began a five-year, \$20 million Blue Carbon Seascapes research project with BHP to explore how several species of *Sargassum* seaweed could reduce the severity of climate change by storing carbon in the ocean. Investigations for the project are already underway off the Ningaloo and Exmouth Gulf coasts off Western Australia. The findings will be transferable to many parts of the globe and will help fill knowledge gaps in this developing area of science.

A partnership agreement between AIMS and Parks Australia has paved the way for a three-year, six million dollar project "Building resilience in Australia's Iconic Oceanic Reefs". The project focuses on Ashmore Reef and the Rowley Shoals off Western Australia. The data collected there will contribute to the development of a framework for oceanic reefs that will guide management decisions across Australia's marine park network.

The year also saw one of our long-term projects conclude. Beginning in 2019, the Woppaburra Coral Project was a partnership with the Woppaburra Traditional Custodians of the Keppel Islands near Rockhampton. The science component investigated the process of coral seeding, survivability and growth, to reduce high mortality during corals' first year of life. This project is a wonderful example of two-way learning, weaving western science with traditional ecological knowledge.

Furthermore, it shows how success can be achieved through enshrining free prior and informed consent. The consent seeking process provides a platform for the development of genuine relationships between AIMS and Traditional Owners based on mutual understanding, trust and respect. This has supported the Woppaburra to build skills and knowledge about spawning and coral aquaculture and created a solid foundation to share and generate knowledge to use, protect and manage sea Country.

Science excellence

From Ningaloo, across the Top End to the Great Barrier Reef, AIMS is uniquely placed to provide the expert scientific advice and solutions for management agencies, marine industries and coastal communities to ensure the sustainable growth, management and protection of our tropical marine estate. During the past year we have mapped potential threats to iconic marine wildlife in the waters of Australia's northwest; we are enhancing coral heat tolerance to help reefs resist climate change; we have investigated whether acoustic enrichment will attract fish to turn degraded reefs into thriving coral reefs again; and we have completed the largest coral restoration research trial ever undertaken with 100,000 baby corals delivered to the Great Barrier Reef.

Technology

ReefWorks has completed its two-year foundation stage supported by the Queensland Government. This tropical marine technology test range has hosted more than 15 Australian innovators, and we are now preparing for the next phase of its development.

ReefCloud is being increasingly used by reef monitoring professionals across the Pacific to rapidly extract and analyse data from images of coral reefs. We have also conducted a series of workshops with Pacific communities to incorporate the latest science and technology into traditional reef monitoring practices. Over the past year, AIMS-developed reef monitoring technology that has been adopted in Southeast Asia. We have worked with colleagues from Vietnam and the Philippines with our ReefScan Transom autonomous imaging system to collect data and analyse it using ReefCloud.

Over the last 12 months we have progressed our Digital Plan. This involves additional recruitment of several key positions, embedding digital and data as core enablers of AIMS science and establishing an agile model into the research pipeline which will be rolled out in the coming year.

Our Technology Transformation Program continues to test ideas, grow our partnerships with developers, and progress technology solutions to increase the extent of autonomous observations within Australia's tropical marine ecosystems.

Impact

Our science is creating impact through achieving AIMS' mission: providing the research and knowledge of Australia's tropical marine estate required to support growth in its sustainable use, effective environmental management and protection of its unique ecosystems. For example, data from our long-term monitoring of the Great Barrier Reef demonstrated that the crown-of-thorns starfish (*Acanthaster planci*) control program protected corals at regional scales. This information provided certainty around the program's value as a resilience-based management tool supporting the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the re-zoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which increased the area of 'no-take' zones where fishing is prohibited. AIMS provided reliable and comprehensive data to examine the efficacy of the decision to rezone the Marine Park, which found that 'no take' zones had a positive effect on the fish and coral communities in the GBR.

A recent survey of our stakeholders found that AIMS is highly regarded and that our research provides them with the timely, accurate and relevant information to manage and operate in our marine estate. Nearly 95% of respondents identified that the science which AIMS produces was relevant for Australia's needs and our Net Promoter Score, among key stakeholders, increased from 61 in 2021 to 71 in 2023.

Safety

Our commitment to safety performance remains strong with improvements of 28 per cent to our injury severity rate, attributable to our ongoing commitment to early intervention, pre- and post- injury. Although we exceeded our target for the total recordable injury frequency rate, we have not improved on last year's results.

We continue to strengthen our safety culture, developing our risk, reporting and learning, focusing on identifying and controlling both physical and psychosocial hazards. This year's People@Work survey, to identify psychosocial hazards, found

that AIMS benchmarks well against other organisations for job resources to demands. A recently commissioned external review of AIMS' Safety Management System will further strengthen our safety record.

People

AIMS attracts some of the best talent from around Australia and the world – our dedicated teams of highly qualified and motivated people are developing practical solutions to achieve positive impact for the nation, and some have received appropriate recognition:

- Professor Madeleine van Oppen, an ecological geneticist and expert on microbial symbiosis and climate change adaptation of reef corals, was elected as a 2024 Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science.
- Dr Jessica Benthuyzen, was recognised as one of Australia's top 250 researchers and named as the nation's leading researcher in the field of oceanography in *The Australian's 2024 Research magazine*.
- Marine science graduate, Danielle Kampers, was awarded a prestigious Fulbright Postgraduate Scholarship to help further her research into plankton and its role in algal blooms.

We are also contributing to developing a new generation of marine scientists in Australia through transfer of inter-generational experience. This can be seen by our co-supervision of 75 postgraduate students and PhD candidates from Australian and international universities.

Infrastructure

This year AIMS has continued to prepare for the future modernisation of AIMS' research vessel fleet. The project team for replacement of the RV *Cape Ferguson* have significantly progressed a detailed vessel design in collaboration with a consortium of local and international naval architects, engineers and designers. The RV *Cape Ferguson* provides AIMS with ocean-going access along the entire Great Barrier Reef to enable our scientists to develop a comprehensive understanding of this iconic ecosystem's tropical marine biodiversity, oceanography and functions in sustaining ocean health. The vessel has, however, exceeded her design life. The design of our next generation research vessel is based on a trimaran concept that incorporates hybrid propulsion, improved performance to support enhanced at-sea science, and the latest technology platforms for integrated data collection.

The National Sea Simulator (SeaSim) has been at the heart of many national and international studies since it first opened in 2013. Its \$42.8 million expansion, including \$36.6 million from the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy to establish SeaSim as a National Facility, is nearing completion with over 1300m² of new experimental space being created, nearly doubling its size. Much of the work undertaken in the SeaSim underpins key Government policies such as the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan, the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy, Nature Positive Plan, and the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program.

In 2025 the expanded SeaSim, funded through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy will enable national and international access under a funded, merit-based application process to undertake science of national and international significance.

Looking to the future, AIMS is refreshing its strategy to strengthen cohesion and integration of our scientific advice across our teams and facilities based in Canberra, Darwin, Perth and Townsville. The impact of our research will be enhanced through our partnerships and delivery of science tailored to the needs of end-users. I look forward to sharing news on how our science is providing co-benefits for Australians and beyond in the coming years. Thank you for your anticipated support.

Professor Selina Stead, Chief Executive Officer

2023/2024

In Brief



An eye on our tropical oceans: long-term biodiversity and water quality monitoring

LTMP
Running for 39 years, our Long-term Monitoring Program for the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) is the world's longest record of change in coral reefs - tracking coral and fish populations, crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks, and the effects of cyclones and coral bleaching. This data is an essential resource to guide decision-making for government, industry and the science community.

Marine Monitoring Program (MMP)
AIMS continues to implement the MMP in collaboration with the GBR Marine Park Authority. Our team records water quality in inshore waters and the cover of hard and soft corals, macroalgae and coral recruitment on 30 inshore reefs. We provide the data to support the Reef report card, and we undertake monitoring to inform several regional report cards including Mackay and Gladstone regions.

Marine science solutions: Reef restoration initiatives

RRAP: Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program
RRAP brings together the best in marine STEM to develop large scale reef interventions for the Great Barrier Reef that are cost-effective, practical, safe and acceptable.

ACRRI: Australian Coral Reef Resilience Initiative
ACRRI uses an ecosystems approach to simultaneously research underwater acoustics to help rebuild fish populations, and develop coral seeding technologies for more resilient reefs.

Blue technology: innovation in marine science

ReefWorks
ReefWorks is Australia's tropical marine technology test range, enabling Australian innovators to trial new marine technologies, autonomous systems and sensors in the real-world tropical environment. Twenty-three activities were conducted in 2023/24 supported by about \$1.13M external investment.

ReefCloud
ReefCloud is a collaborative platform using automated data management and artificial intelligence to optimise coral reef monitoring - empowering scientists, governments, and communities to protect and restore coral reefs on a global scale.

ReefScan
A suite of technology-based solutions for coral researchers and environmental managers to conduct in-field marine observations.

TROPICAL NORTHERN AUSTRALIA FIELD OPERATIONS



Indigenous Partnerships Program

Our Indigenous Partnerships Program weaves AIMS science with the rights, responsibilities and knowledge of sea Country Traditional Owners across northern Australia.

- We work together to**
- Seek free prior informed consent for AIMS' research activities on Country;
 - Deliver new knowledge in areas prioritised by Traditional Owners;
 - Build training and employment pathways;
 - Co-design and co-deliver partnership projects.



SCIENCE OUTPUT

154

PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES*

56% WITH INTERNATIONAL CO-AUTHORSHIP

42% WITH NATIONAL CO-AUTHORSHIP

*Data from Scival, at July 2024.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

↑ 92%

INCREASE IN RECYCLING*

↓ 28% REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS ACROSS OUR OPERATIONS^A

↓ 28% REDUCTION IN SOLID WASTE TO LANDFILL

*from baseline year
^AScope 1 and 2 emissions

SCIENCE IMPACT

>5x

RETURN ON GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

>\$200m

ECONOMIC RETURN ESTIMATE

NATIONAL SEA SIMULATOR

\$42.7m

OVER 3 YEARS

NATIONAL FACILITY EXPANSION IS ONGOING THROUGH 23/24.

NEAR DOUBLING OF EXPERIMENTAL SPACE AND SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN SEAWATER PROCESSING.

SAFETY PERFORMANCE

INJURY SEVERITY RATE

14%

BETTER THAN TARGET

TOTAL RECORDABLE INJURY FREQUENCY RATE (TRIFR)

12

4 OVER TARGET (8)

POLICY IMPACTS

22%

OF OUTPUTS CITED BY POLICY ACROSS

27

COUNTRIES

*2019-2023 data, Scival

FINANCES

\$99.9m

APPROPRIATIONS

\$65.3m

EXTERNAL REVENUE

\$137m

TOTAL EXPENSES

INDIGENOUS ARTWORK DESIGN BY WEMBA WEMBA ARTIST DAVID FLAGG

About AIMS

The Australian Institute of Marine Science is a corporate Commonwealth entity established 52 years ago under the *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972* (AIMS Act). As Australia's national tropical marine research agency, it is our mission to provide the research and knowledge of Australia's tropical marine estate required to support growth in its sustainable use, effective environmental management and protection of its unique ecosystems.

To accomplish our mission, AIMS delivers independent science to help realise three key long-term impacts for the nation:

- improve the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems across northern Australia
- create economic, social and environmental net benefits for marine industries and coastal communities
- protect coral reefs and other tropical marine environments from the effects of climate change.

AIMS' headquarters was established on Cape Ferguson near Townsville in recognition of the importance of the Great Barrier Reef to Australia. Today, we also operate from bases in Perth and Darwin, which allows us to conduct research across northern Australia, spanning two oceans and three regional seas (see Figure 1).

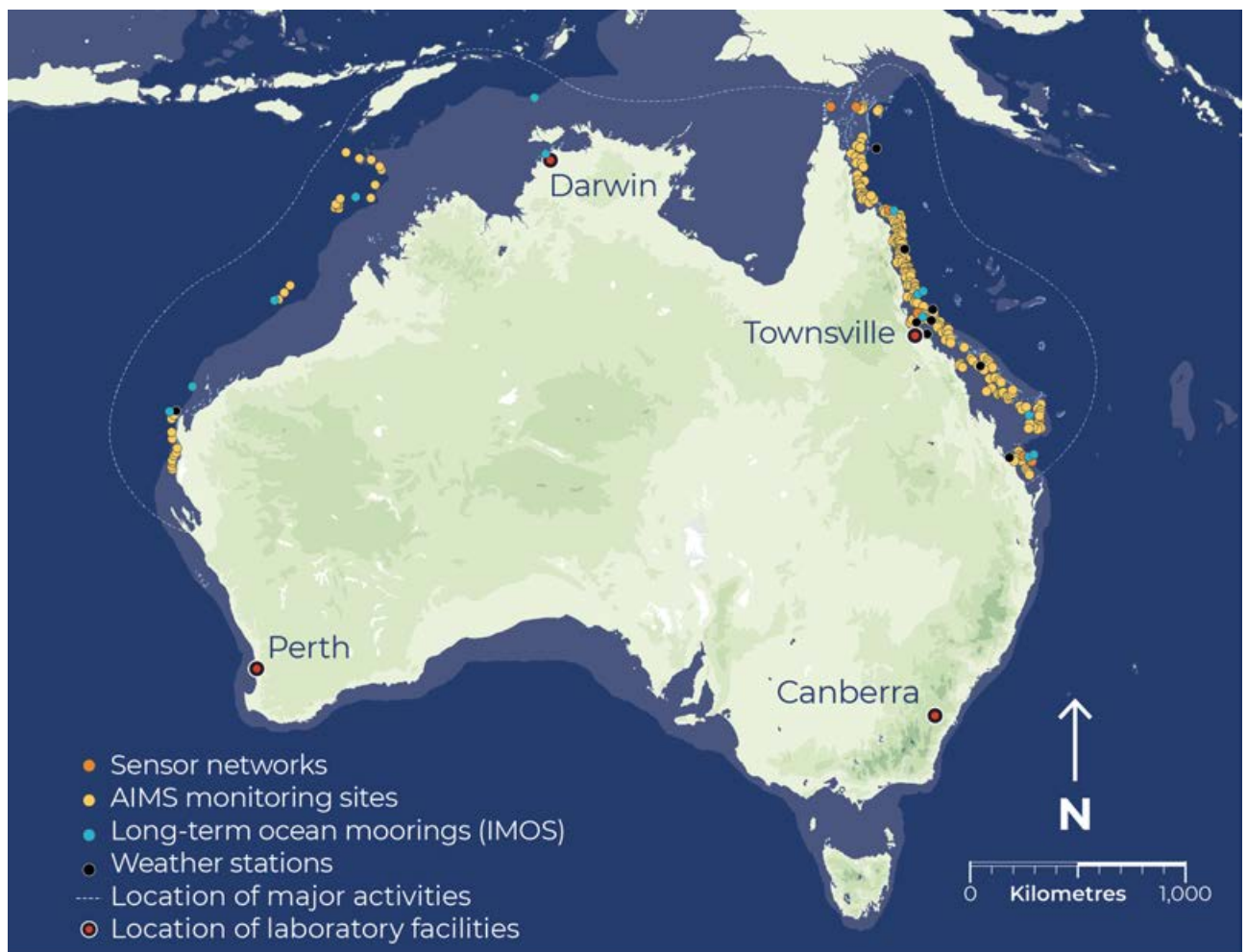


Figure 1: Location of AIMS' facilities and major activities

AIMS recognises that Australia's First Nations peoples are the Traditional Owners of the Sea Country within which AIMS works. Traditional Owners have a knowledge system that is based on tens of thousands of years of observations and environmental information that is passed down through the generations. AIMS seeks to build meaningful partnerships with Traditional Owners of Sea Country in northern Australia to deliver impactful research for all Australians. That is why, in AIMS Strategy 2030, we commit to undertaking science collaborations with Traditional Owners in key projects based on Sea Country.

Our Traditional Owner collaborations are growing and we are developing relationships based on trust, respect and two-way knowledge sharing that brings traditional knowledge and perspectives together with western science to create new insights into local marine ecosystems.

AIMS is uniquely placed to provide the expert advice and solutions for management agencies, marine industries, and coastal communities to preserve our marine estate and ensure its sustainable use. Our research is focused on the priorities of our partners, including Traditional Owners and research organisations and our stakeholders, including Commonwealth, state and territory governments and industry.

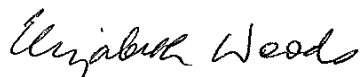
Australia's tropical marine ecosystems provide jobs, contribute to national prosperity and hold intrinsic social and cultural value for all Australians, and they are under increasing stress from human and environmental disturbances. AIMS' research knowledge is applied where it can have the greatest impact to ensure Australia's tropical oceans will continue to provide sustainable wealth and enjoyment for generations to come.

Part 2: Performance Statements

STATEMENT OF PREPARATION

As the accountable authority of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, I present the 2023-24 annual performance statements of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, as required under paragraph 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and other applicable legislation. In my opinion, these annual performance statements are based on properly maintained records, accurately reflect the performance of the entity, and comply with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

The content of the performance statements was endorsed on 16 September 2024.



Dr Elizabeth Woods OAM
Council Chair
Australian Institute of Marine Science

Entity Purpose

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) is a corporate Commonwealth entity and its purpose is to improve ocean health. The mission of AIMS is to provide the research and knowledge of Australia's tropical marine estate required to support growth in its sustainable use, effective environmental management and protection of its unique ecosystems.

In pursuing its mission, AIMS deploys its core research capabilities and infrastructure, and establishes strategic collaborative partnerships with government, industry, research and First Nations peoples to deliver three key long-term impacts for the nation:

- Improved health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems across northern Australia;
- Economic, social and environmental net benefits for marine industries and coastal communities; and
- Protection of coral reefs and other marine ecosystems from the effects of climate change.

Intended Outcomes

AIMS' Annual Performance Statement reports on the performance results against the forecasts made in the corporate plan and Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS), and provides other performance information relevant to AIMS. The information provided herein this Annual Report provides an analysis of the factors that contributed to AIMS' performance results against the Outcome: Growth of knowledge to support protection and sustainable development of Australia's marine resources through innovative marine science and technology.

AIMS' contribution to Outcome 2 - Conserve, protect and sustainably manage our natural resources including through a nature positive approach; protect and conserve our natural and cultural heritage; reduce and regulate the use of pollutants and hazardous substances; and take a leadership role on these issues internationally - of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water PBS, is made through linked programs involved in implementing the Reef 2050 Plan to protect and restore the Great Barrier Reef.

The 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statement Table 2.1.2 identifies how AIMS is working to deliver nine research outcomes by providing:

- baseline, status and trend data that are the trusted information base for stakeholder decisions;
- more information for stakeholders, produced through autonomous and automated technologies and processes;
- science that underpins conservation and management of threatened and endangered marine species;
- models of environmental condition and function that are used to manage tropical marine ecosystems;
- improved tropical marine ecosystem health via AIMS' solutions that mitigate local, regional and cumulative pressures;
- coral reef condition forecasts based on knowledge of recovery, acclimatisation and adaptation;
- restoration science and scalable technologies that help coral reefs resist, adapt to, and recover from climate change impacts;
- advanced data analysis workflows and knowledge delivery systems that improve stakeholder use of AIMS information, and;
- decision support tools that are used by stakeholders for management decisions and policies.

The performance results of AIMS' marine research programs are assessed against a set of eight high level performance criteria summarised in Table 1.

Results and Commentary on Performance

AIMS achieved most high-priority research outcomes detailed in the AIMS Portfolio Budget Statement 2023-24, and the AIMS Corporate Plan 2023-24.

Table 1 provides a summary of our performance results against the AIMS 2023-24 Key Performance Indicators.

Table 1: Overall performance summary

Table legend

All expectations met = Y

Most expectations met = -

Expectations not met = N

Performance Criteria	Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) performance targets	KPIs (Corporate Plan)	Result	Expectations Met
AIMS research creates a positive triple bottom line contribution (impact value) to Australia	Minimum two case studies	≥ 2 new triple bottom line case studies published per year (pa)	Two case studies were produced in 2023-24.	Y
		Demonstrate ≥\$200 million pa total impact value	Work continued with the Centre for International Economics to convert previous impact analyses into a forecasting tool to allow AIMS to build upon the enduring historical benefits which exceeded the target.	Y
Deliver strategic and applied research and monitoring that addresses national research priorities and stakeholder needs	Achieve revenue budget from stakeholder commissioned research	Achieve revenue budget from stakeholder commissioned research	Net external revenue for 2023-24 was \$18.7 million (\$25.59m in 2022-23) compared with a budget of \$16.91 million, an increase of \$1.79 million (11 per cent).	Y
Maintain or increase current standings for scientific excellence, innovation and impact	Maintain acknowledged domestic and global high standing in relevant fields of research, and confidence of key stakeholders in research outputs	Maintain Top 3 ranking in marine science in Australia and top 10 globally	When utilising the Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) metric for Marine Science organisations globally for the time period of 2021 – 2023 AIMS is ranked #1 across all outputs.	Y
		Maintain high stakeholder confidence in AIMS' scientific outputs gauged using a net promoter score NPS >55	A net promoter score (NPS) survey of AIMS' key stakeholders increased from 61 in 2021 to 71 in 2023. A recent survey of our stakeholders found that AIMS is highly regarded and that our research provides them with the timely, accurate and relevant information to manage and operate in our marine estate. Nearly 95% of respondents identified that the science which AIMS produces was relevant for Australia's needs. The NPS is a common method to measure and improve customer loyalty. Customers rate their likelihood of recommending a company to others. The index ranges from -100 (unlikely to recommend) to +100 (very likely to recommend).	Y

Performance Criteria	Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) performance targets	KPIs (Corporate Plan)	Result	Expectations Met
Deliver research advice and scientific products that are critical for stakeholders to assess the impacts of natural and human pressures on sensitive marine ecosystems	Maintain or increase the number of peer reviewed publications and other knowledge products, and make datasets or data products publicly available	Maintain annual journal publication rates \geq 200 journal articles and technical reports	According to SciVal, AIMS published 147 papers in 2023. This figure reflects a global trend of declining publication numbers observed in some sectors like marine science in recent years, influenced by a multitude of factors. AIMS has strategically transitioned towards longer and larger research programs to increase the scale of our impact and has focused on fewer projects in recent years. These strategic initiatives necessitate extended periods for data collection and early-stage discovery research, ultimately leading to higher-quality research outputs as the science develops. As AIMS continues to expand, it is anticipated that new researchers will gradually begin to produce publications based on their research conducted at AIMS. Initially, their publications are likely to be related to their previous research endeavours and we recognise that publication metrics serve as a lagging indicator, and the effects of any actions or events are often realised over a multi-year period.	N
		100 per cent of datasets collected using public monies are made publicly available within one year of collection	The outputs of research funded by specific government programs are available within one year of collection.	Y
Increase research capability, capacity, impact and science diplomacy through participation in formal national and international collaborations, joint ventures, partnerships and strategic alliances	Maintain or increase the number and scale of domestic and international research partnerships, collaborations, joint ventures and strategic alliances	Maintain proportion of AIMS' projects involving collaborators (\geq 80 per cent)	During 2023-24 AIMS maintained its strong record of collaboration. The proportion of AIMS' projects involving external collaborators was 98.6 per cent by total value.	Y
	Specialist advice and expertise provided by AIMS is used by relevant advisory panels and committees	\geq 2 new case studies that demonstrate the value of AIMS' contributions for advisory panels and committees	<p>AIMS plays a key role in the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC), the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan, the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP), and Australia's Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS). AIMS has also participated in the following formal national and international collaborations, joint ventures, partnerships and strategic alliances in 2023-24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An international collaboration via the G20 with CORDAP (Coral Research and Development Accelerator Platform) for the introduction of ReefSeed to generate coral larvae for reef restoration A national collaboration with University of Melbourne, Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical studies and the Melbourne Centre for Nanofabrication on breeding heat tolerant algal symbionts to help coral be more resilient to thermal stress In conjunction with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development in the Philippines, AIMS has been sharing its expertise and coral reef habitat monitoring technology with Philippine researchers so that they have the latest data and information about the condition of their reefs. 	Y

Performance Criteria	Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) performance targets	KPIs (Corporate Plan)	Result	Expectations Met
Improve research outcomes and impact through increasing Traditional Owner engagement in the planning and delivery of coastal research and development	Improve research outcomes and impact through increasing Traditional Owner engagement in the planning and delivery of coastal research and development	≥ 1 new case study per year that demonstrates how engagement with Traditional Owner communities improves outcomes for the community and delivers value for AIMS' science	The following case studies were published in 2023-24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate impacts on Northern Australia's turtle populations Unravelling monitoring trends for sea Country management 	Y
Reduce AIMS' environmental footprint	20 per cent reduction in AIMS' carbon emissions compared with 2017-18	Carbon emission reduction ≥ 25 per cent compared with 2017-18	The overall per cent reduction in total CO ₂ emissions across our operations was 28 per cent compared with 2017-18.	Y
	20 per cent reduction in AIMS' waste to landfill compared with 2018-19	Solid waste to landfill from normal operations reduced by ≥ 20 per cent compared with 2018-19	This year we have achieved a reduction in solid waste to landfill of 43 tonnes compared with 2018-19. This represents a 28 per cent reduction from the 2018-19 base year.	Y
Optimal utilisation of research infrastructure assets	Maintain or increase use of research infrastructure	≥ 90 per cent use of major research assets	The overall utilisation of major assets was 80.5 per cent. While our research vessels maintained very high utilization (95%), some of our experimental facilities had lower than expected utilisation due to reduced demand on experimental space from a number of large projects.	N

Ministerial Statement of Expectations

On 13 December 2023, the Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, provided the AIMS Council with a Statement of Expectations outlining the Minister's expectations for AIMS in resolving national challenges, advancing the Government's policy priorities, and driving organisational performance¹. The AIMS Council responded to the Minister on 23 April 2024 with a Statement of Intent confirming AIMS' commitment to the Australian Government's policy agenda and the strong connections between this and the AIMS Strategy 2030.

¹ The Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent are available at: <https://www.aims.gov.au/about/corporate-profile>

Research Impact

Publications

AIMS continues to publish our research findings in top journals on topics including: managing marine biodiversity and ecosystems at the local and regional scales including threatened and endangered species with an increased emphasis in practical tools for stakeholders, how oceanography governs marine ecosystems and their effects on society, ecosystem status and trends and the processes that underpin ecosystem dynamics for use in management in Australia and abroad, modelling complex systems and processes within the marine environment to better understand future states, and understanding the multitude of interacting pressures affecting marine and coastal ecosystems like climate change, ocean acidification and declining water quality.

This information is critical for stakeholders to assess the impacts of natural and human pressures on sensitive marine ecosystems and supports AIMS to deliver on its nine research outcomes as summarised in the below table.

Table 2: Research outcomes

Research Outcomes		
Baseline, status and trend data that are the trusted information base for stakeholder decisions	More information for stakeholders produced through autonomous and automated technologies and processes	Science that underpins conservation and management of threatened and endangered marine species
Models of environmental condition and function that are used to manage tropical marine ecosystems	Improved health for tropical marine ecosystems via AIMS’ solutions that mitigate local, regional and cumulative pressures	Coral reef condition forecasts based on knowledge of recovery, acclimatisation and adaptation
Restoration science and scalable technologies help coral reefs resist, adapt to, and recover from climate change impacts	Advanced data analysis workflows and knowledge delivery systems improve stakeholder use of AIMS information	Decision support tools that are used by stakeholders for management decisions and policies

For the 2023-2024 Annual Report, AIMS has revised the way it captures and reports on publications as part of the transition to a more comprehensive method of monitoring AIMS’ research performance. Data for the 2023 reporting period focuses exclusively on peer-reviewed publications that have a 2023 publication date, as captured by the research performance assessment tool Scival. This allows AIMS to validate data inputs and enables comparison with AIMS’ past performance and the performance of other leading marine research organisations. Reporting using only peer reviewed publications shows a decrease in the number of publications produced by AIMS over the past two years (Figure 2). Whilst it is challenging to identify exact reasons for the decrease due to the lag between journal submission and publishing, it is noted that over recent years, AIMS has shifted into larger more integrated and longer-term research programs with a greater number of collaborating scientists. Such a shift could imply that it will take more time to develop the “higher quality” outputs. Additionally, key scientists with high publication rates and who have significant influence in the AIMS publishing network have moved on to more senior positions in other organisations or transitioned to retirement over the past 6-years. While AIMS has recruited new scientists, they will take time to start contributing to AIMS’ publication performance.

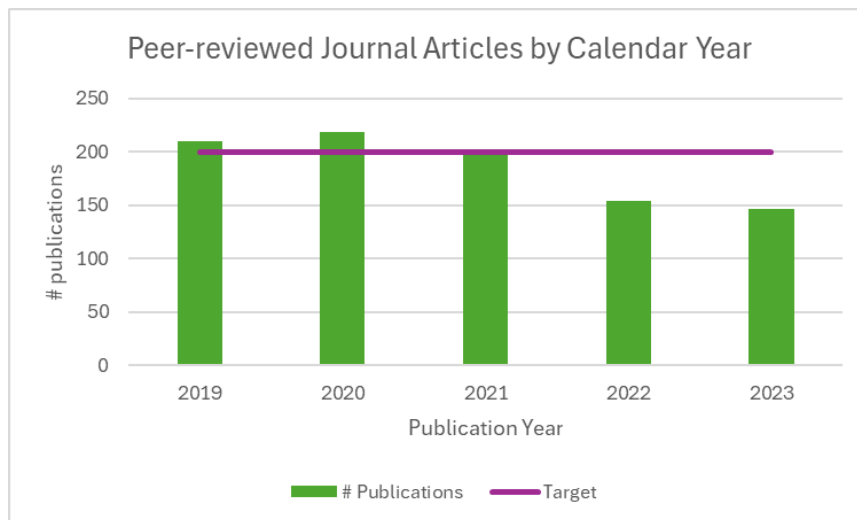


Figure 2: Number of AIMS publications by type, 2019-2023, including annual performance target (purple line), data from Scival.

Globally, the push for open access continues to gain momentum with institutions, including AIMS, increasingly supporting open access and making their academic publications freely accessible to the public. This movement aims to address issues related to the accessibility and affordability of scholarly information. In 2023, 80.2% of AIMS peer-reviewed publications were made available through Open Access. The quality of AIMS' research outputs is demonstrated by our consistently high position in the benchmarking of Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) data compared to other marine research organisations. FWCI is a useful metric to benchmark entities regardless of differences in their size, disciplinary profile, age, and publication-type composition. FWCI calculates an average value, and these types of calculations are strongly influenced by outlying publications in a small data set. Therefore, we have used a five-year rolling average FWCI to benchmark AIMS' performance. Using this approach, AIMS is ranked second against comparison organisations. While most organisations benchmarked have seen a decrease over the reporting period, there has been a steeper decrease in the five-year average FWCI seen at AIMS. (Figure 3).

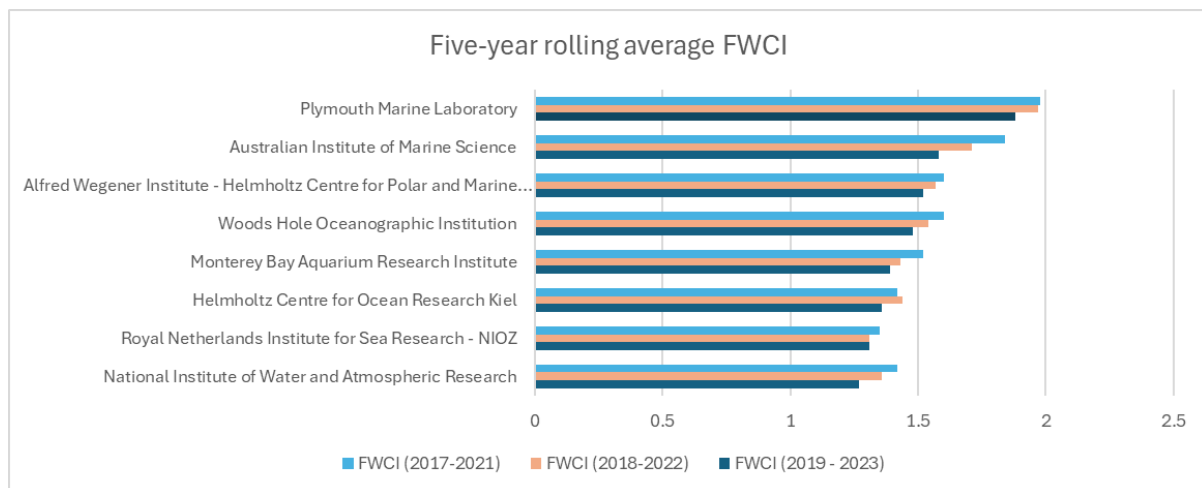


Figure 3: Comparison of rolling 5-year average Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) of similar marine research organisations, (SciVal data extracted July 2024)

In addition to peer reviewed journal articles and reviews, we also produced numerous client reports, technical reports and conference papers. AIMS continued to publish reports on the long-term health of the inshore, mid-shore and offshore reefs of the Great Barrier Reef through the Long-Term Monitoring Program (LTMP) and Marine Monitoring Program (MMP) which monitor the state of coral reefs and – in the case of the MMP – inshore water quality which impacts coral reef health. The LTMP's Annual Summary Reports provide an invaluable record of change by surveying coral reef communities over an expansive area of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). The surveys are reported both after the conclusion of each field trip and annually, providing the most comprehensive record of reef condition available for the GBR extending over several decades. Data from the MMP and LTMP also feeds into various report cards which deliver informative overviews of ecosystem status to stakeholders from multiple sectors. We deliver reports to Aboriginal Corporations including Bardi Jawi Aboriginal Corporation, and a range of industries and government department partners including, WA Department of Biodiversity,

Conservation and Attractions and Parks Australia. Our reports to the offshore energy industry, coastal ports and coastal based refineries helps industry, their stakeholders and regulators protect Australia's unique seascape for future generations.

AIMS' complete publication bibliography for 2023 is available on the [Corporate Publications section of the AIMS website](#).

Science Leadership

AIMS is a recognised leader in marine science, both globally and nationally. Our work is highly cited, influential and relevant to various stakeholders including researchers, policy makers and industry. AIMS' research findings and data are published in reputable journals and platforms and shared through industry reports and at conferences and other fora. AIMS staff and students contribute to national and international fora and initiatives which align with the AIMS mission. AIMS plays a key role in the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC), the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan, the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP), and Australia's Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS). These remain important platforms for advancing marine science and policy in Australia.

Beyond representing AIMS on a number of committees and programs, our staff engage with diverse partners from the government, not-for-profit, community and research sectors. For example, AIMS has provided impartial scientific advice to the Commonwealth National Environmental Science Program (NESP) Tropical Water Quality (TWQ) and Marine Biodiversity Hubs, and the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership (GHHP) Independent Science Panel, which oversees the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Report Card. On the international stage, AIMS coordinates the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), a network of the International Coral Reef Initiative that aims to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems worldwide. AIMS also collaborates with DFAT, Queensland University of Technology, the Coral Reef Innovation Project and partner Pacific Island nations to develop technologies for coral reef monitoring in Australia and the Pacific. A complete list of external committees and national and international fora that we advise on is available on the [Corporate Publications section of the AIMS website](#).

Partnerships

AIMS pursues partnerships to leverage the scientific capabilities and capacities that address the critical challenges facing our marine ecosystems, and to enhance the impact of our science by engaging with stakeholders and users in co-designing and co-delivering research. Our goal is to increase research capability, capacity, impact and science diplomacy through participation in formal national and international collaborations, joint ventures, partnerships and strategic alliances. We connect with national and global marine science networks, forging joint ventures and strategic alliances that enable collaborative research projects at a larger scale and scope. Examples include the Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI), the National Environmental Science Program (NESP), the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS), and the Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre (IOMRC). AIMS also has strategic relationships with several university partners including via the AIMS@JCU, AIMS@UWA, and AIMS@CDU initiatives that support early career researchers and foster the next generation of marine scientists. We also partner with leading institutions to develop and implement innovative and adaptive solutions that improve the conservation and management of coral reefs and other reef-dependent biodiversity, which provide significant socioeconomic benefits. These partners include James Cook University, Queensland University of Technology and several international research institutes, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the United States of America, the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, and the Palau International Coral Reef Center.

Fostering Research Capability

AIMS fosters a pipeline of talent and expertise for the marine sector by providing opportunities for early career researchers to enhance their skills and knowledge through postdoctoral and postgraduate programs, scholarships and traineeships. AIMS also engages with Indigenous high school students to inspire them to pursue careers in marine science through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Marine Science initiative.

Postdoctoral research

During 2023-2024, AIMS co-funded or fully supported Postdoctoral Fellows (see Table 3) under agreements with:

- James Cook University (2)
- Queensland University of Technology (1)
- Santos (2)
- Woodside (2)
- BHP (1)
- Charles Darwin University (2)
- AIMS@UWA Alliance (3)
- Marie Curie Research Fellowship (1)
- Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (1)
- University of Queensland (2)
- Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (5)

During 2023-2024, AIMS staff co-supervised 75 postgraduate students, mostly PhD Candidates, from 13 Australian universities and an increasing number of international universities.

AIMS' involvement in research training is reflected in individual staff members holding adjunct academic appointments at Australian or international institutions, including:

- James Cook University, through AIMS@JCU
- University of Western Australia, through the AIMS@UWA Alliance
- University of Queensland
- Charles Darwin University
- Queensland University of Technology
- University of Melbourne

Many of these adjunct positions reflect a large personal contribution to postgraduate supervision as part of AIMS' commitment to capacity building in marine sciences and related disciplinary expertise.

Table 3: Number of Postdoctoral Fellows, postgraduates and occupational trainees, 2019-20 to 2023-24

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Postdoctoral Fellows	25	29	31	30	27
Postgraduate students supervised by AIMS staff	62	68	82	76	75
Occupational trainees and interns	21	14	15	15	13

Science Quality Assurance

The AIMS Quality Policy, approved by the AIMS Council, establishes clear standards and expectations for the delivery of quality scientific research and services in line with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018. The AIMS Responsible Conduct of Research Framework, which sets out AIMS’ expectations for the conduct of all persons engaged in research under the auspices of the Institute, articulates - in conjunction with AIMS strategy 2030 – the broad principles that characterise an ambitious, honest, ethical and conscientious research culture and establishes a framework that provides a foundation for high quality research, credibility and community trust in our research outputs.

We apply robust quality assurance and quality control procedures to ensure we deliver high-quality and timely research to our stakeholders. Our research undergoes peer review at various stages throughout the research pipeline, involving both internal and external reviewers. All prospective projects are assessed by the relevant Research Program Directors and, if required, the CEO to ensure their alignment with AIMS Strategy 2030, their appropriateness for public funding and resource allocation, and their potential to deliver tangible benefits to stakeholders.

Projects are led by a Project Leader who is supported by the staff in the AIMS Project Management Office. The subsequent release of project outputs follows rigorous internal review and complies with several policies and procedures, such as Intellectual Property, Data Access and External Document Control policies and FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data principles.

In 2022-23 a major external review of the quality and impact of our science was conducted by a panel of eminent international experts. In 2023-24 we continued to implement the actions that arose out of the review.

Data management and dissemination

The Digital Architecture team, with dedicated data governance officers, secure and steward the Institute’s research data into AIMS’ data repository, making it globally discoverable and accessible via AIMS’ research data platform managed by the AIMS Data and Digital Engineering team. Our metadata and selected national scale data holdings are also submitted to the Australian Ocean Data Network portal and the Research Data Australia data catalogue, increasing their accessibility and allowing integration into national datasets.

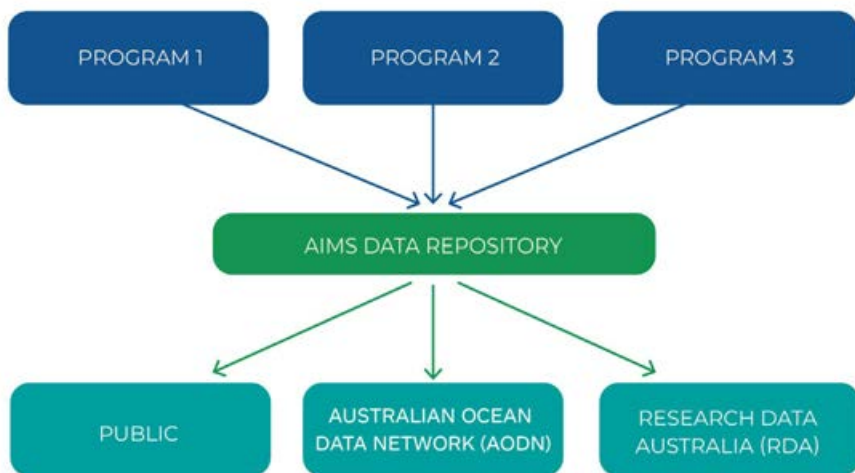


Figure 4: AIMS’ research programs deliver data into the AIMS Data Repository allowing centralised management and facilitating reuse

Figure 5 below depicts AIMS data collections, along with some of their key data metrics.

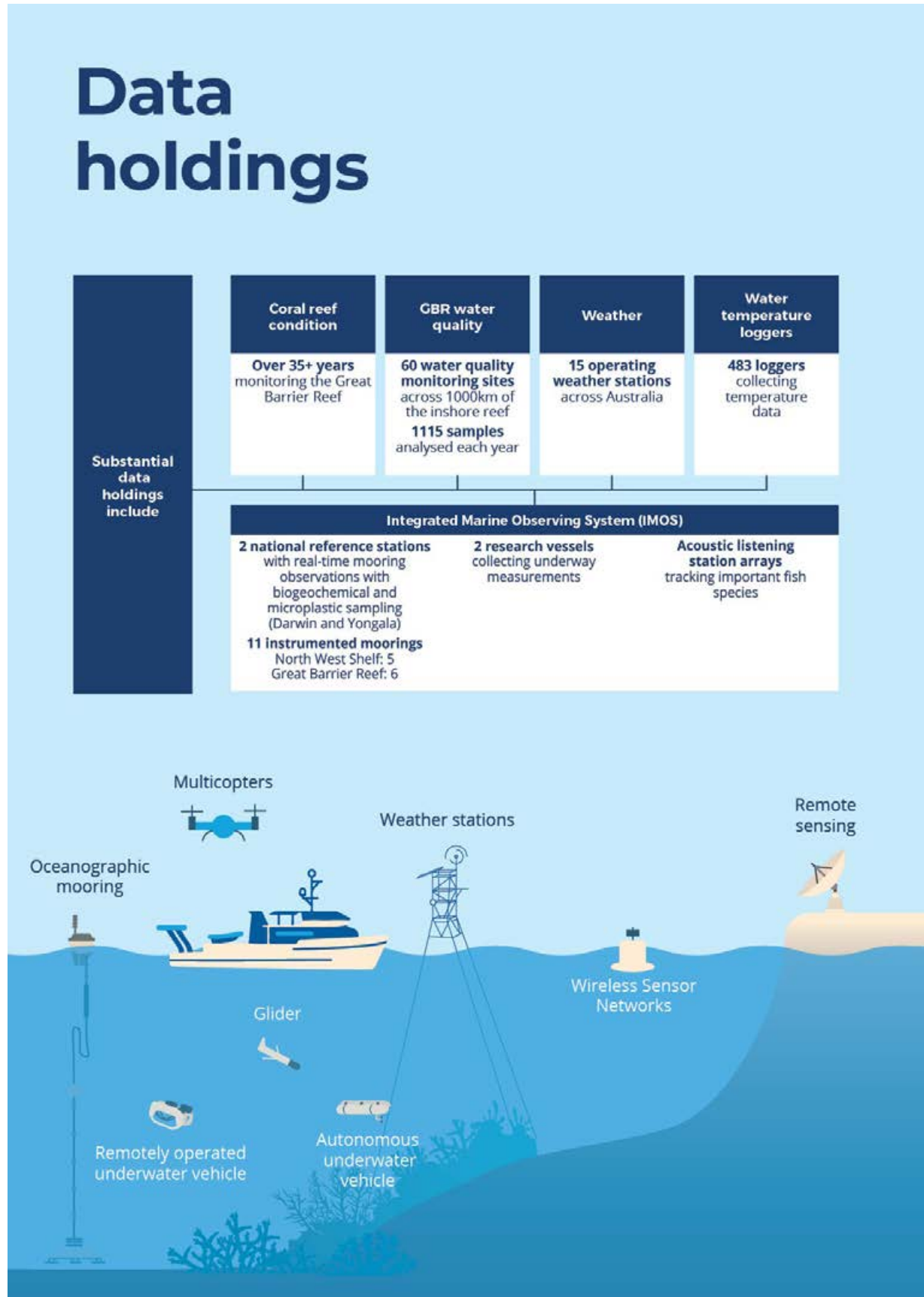


Figure 5: Extensive technology deployed to provide data on environmental variations in Australia’s coastal seas and landmark datasets critical to national and international stakeholders in marine science

Stakeholder Engagement

Our research, internal and external relationships, and organisational ethos are guided by a set of principles that reflect our focus on supporting key stakeholders. Our values are:



Figure 6: AIMS Values

AIMS delivers high quality research that meets the needs of our stakeholders across various domains, including molecular and microbiology, mathematical and statistical modelling, ocean monitoring, ecological impacts, marine noise, and decision support. We collaborate with our stakeholders to co-design and co-produce research products that are fit for purpose and have direct impact. We also provide foresighting services to inform our stakeholders of emerging issues and opportunities that may affect their strategic planning and resource allocation and bring benefit to the stakeholders and their beneficiaries. Key stakeholders who benefited from AIMS’ activities during the year are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Stakeholders benefiting from AIMS activities in 2023-24

Stakeholder category	Sector/organisation	Examples of AIMS delivering for stakeholders
First Nations Australians	Traditional Owner groups, Indigenous ranger organisations & Indigenous corporations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnering with Traditional Owners through their organisations to support their inherited right and responsibility to directly manage marine resources and bio-cultural heritage within sea Country Supporting Traditional Owners’ decision-making rights through our commitment to seeking free prior informed consent for all AIMS projects that intersect with sea Country Co-designing and co-delivering partnership projects with Traditional Owner organisations that deliver tangible benefits to them particularly in sea Country management, including new knowledge, training and capacity building in new skills and methods, and new opportunities to apply and showcase culture Establishing a framework for a Northern Australian Marine Monitoring Alliance of Traditional Owner-led monitoring partnerships, including training materials, a website and a dashboard-based data platform with new data management, interrogation and visualization tools to inform sea Country managers and the self-management of their marine resources Delivering training and capacity building to a cohort of GBR Indigenous Rangers in areas of priority to them (e.g. marine monitoring) and future workforce needs (e.g. reef restoration and adaptation) Supporting cultural revival in Traditional Owner groups that had experienced past disconnection with culture and Country, by bringing Traditional Owners back to Country in partnership projects. For example, the Woppaburra Coral Project created several impactful on-Country opportunities for the Woppaburra people of the Keppel Islands to partner with AIMS. This enabled two-way knowledge sharing, establishing baseline data for future sea Country management, delivering training and capacity building in reef restoration skills, and linking science with culture and new cultural practices

Stakeholder category	Sector/organisation	Examples of AIMS delivering for stakeholders
Government and public	Australian Government and public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enabling assessment of cumulative impacts from natural and anthropogenic stressors on the Great Barrier Reef active participation in the delivery of the Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan active participation in the delivery of the 2022 Scientific Consensus Statement on land-based impacts on Great Barrier Reef water quality and ecosystem condition. partnering with DCCEEW to deliver the next generation of Water Quality guidelines for Australia, New Zealand and Canada Partnering with Parks Australia to better understand the habitats, biodiversity and resilience of marine communities in Australian Marine Parks partnering with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to build reef monitoring and reporting capability within Pacific nations, by leading the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network and contributing to the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Reef Protection and Restoration developing an accessible mapping system for visualising complex environmental research data engaging with the public and stakeholders directly and via the AIMS website to increase environmental knowledge and identify any gaps and potential risks investing in early postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows to ensure tropical Australia has the required marine science workforce advising Australian Government ministers and their advisers on major marine science developments, risks and long-term effects of disturbances affecting the marine environment fostering education and employment potential of northern Australia's Indigenous youth through participation in the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in Marine Science (ATSIMS) and Aboriginal Summer School for Excellence in Technology and Science (ASSETS) programs informing parliamentary inquiries through submissions and testimony at hearings
Government and public	Higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting postdoctoral fellowships and higher degree research students by providing supervision, funding and a research environment focused on quality and impact making research infrastructure like our research vessels and National Sea Simulator available for postgraduate student projects to train them in cutting-edge capabilities not available in universities freely publishing our data for use by university researchers
Government and public	Philanthropic Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leading implementation of the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF), including understanding coral health, their resilience to acute and chronic pressures, potential interventions and management options working with the GBRF to improve our ability to forecast and respond to Crown-of-Thorns Starfish outbreaks by understanding outbreak triggers and developing potential management responses collaborating with the Minderoo Foundation on reef restoration and resilience at Ningaloo Reef delivering the Australian Coral Reef Resilience Initiative (ACRRI) - a seven-year AU\$27 million research project jointly funded by BHP and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
Government and public	Queensland Government and public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding the impact and risks of changed land use practices on water quality in the GBR Marine Park deploying oceanographic buoy technologies under the Queensland Research Infrastructure Co-investment Fund to monitor wave conditions, better understand risks to Queensland fisheries species and increase shipping safety within the maritime sector
Government and public	Western Australian Government and public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> determining patterns of seabed biodiversity in the Kimberley region and their causes to enable management evaluating dredging impacts by surveying sensitive seabed organisms informing guidelines for marine dredging programs partnering with the Departments of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and Primary Industry and Regional Development to deliver monitoring of key species in Western Australian coastal waters collaborating with IMOS to maintain an oceanographic mooring for monitoring conditions at Ningaloo Reef, one of Australia's World Heritage sites

Stakeholder category	Sector/organisation	Examples of AIMS delivering for stakeholders
Managers and regulators	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> publishing the Reef Snapshot with GBRMPA and CSIRO, a new annual report of how the Great Barrier Reef has fared over summer maintaining a multidecadal report on the state of the GBR contributing expertise about the impacts of development activities on the GBR Working with NOPSEMA to understand ecological Impacts and informing Operational and Scientific Monitoring Programs participating in developing the RIMReP (Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program) advising on the implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan, a joint initiative of the Queensland and Commonwealth governments collaborating with GBRMPA's Joint Field Management Program to expedite adoption of autonomous technologies and automated data analyses to magnify surveillance coverage starting new microbial observatories in collaboration with Queensland universities and IMOS to provide another powerful tool to monitor the health of, and risks to, the GBR and explore opportunities to share learnings to monitor other coral reefs around the globe
International Stakeholders	ICRI G20 SPREP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actively contributing to the delivery of the ICRI Plan of Action through the hosting of the GCRMN, and technical input to the ICRI Secretariat representing the Australian Government on the G20 Coral Research and Development Accelerator Platform (CORDAP) Initiative Governing Committee and co-chairing CORDAP's Scientific and Advisory Committee collaborating with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) to deliver projects that engage with Pacific nations to increase their capability in coral reef monitoring Peer-to-peer collaborations with NOAA staff on coral bleaching research and communications. Supporting NOAA as the joint US Focal Point for ICRI (with the US Department of State). The US is also the current Chair of ICRI
Industry	North-west Australian oil and gas industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enabling industry to plan and manage their risks and environmental compliance by developing practical and meaningful baselines, monitoring key ecosystems in order to understand natural levels of variability against which to assess the effects of industrial activities, and understanding the ecotoxicology of complex mixtures of contaminants that occur in real world situations determining potential impacts of oil and gas industry activity on stakeholders, like seismic surveys effects on pearl oyster populations injecting our expertise into multiple fora to minimise environmental impacts of dredging, drilling and other excavation activities informing strategies and plans of both regulators and companies for decommissioning offshore operations championing and enabling the sharing of marine environmental data across industry sectors through collaboration informing regulators and companies on the development and employment of improved toxicity thresholds for uncontrolled oil discharges in tropical ecosystems
Industry	Darwin Ports Commodity ports: Port of Townsville, Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivering systems to improve Darwin Harbour's port operations assessing the impacts of dredging to improve risk-based dredging protocols and identifying better parameters to measure these impacts improving understanding of how priority commodities (e.g. metals) behave in the marine environment so ports and their stakeholders can ensure their operations have minimal environmental impact determining likely targets, and their sensitivities, in the event of accidental release of contaminants from point sources developing historical baselines for environmental performance by analysing coral skeletons for evidence of local environmental events such as floods and potential contaminations improving data management and information delivery to stakeholders in Gladstone Harbour

Stakeholder category	Sector/organisation	Examples of AIMS delivering for stakeholders
Industry	Coastal industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring what is monitored for regulatory compliance is practical, relevant and meaningful (Australia and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council guidelines and regulated industry) applying and proving new technologies for improved in situ monitoring of dredging operations and environmental regulatory compliance informing implementation of appropriate preventions, mitigations and responses by determining likely routes that might be taken by industrial effluent developing tropically relevant ecotoxicological assays so subsequent assessments, standards and guidelines have real-world utility determining the potential impacts during decommissioning of onshore minerals industry infrastructure on near shore benthic communities and water quality improving understanding of fine-scale oceanographic processes of rapidly evolving ocean currents and their extremes using ocean models and observations to develop predictive models important for offshore industries

Communication

Clear and relevant strategic communication is essential for AIMS to build and maintain its reputation and brand. Through the communication of our research achievements AIMS positions itself as a leader in marine science providing the knowledge required to support the use, management and protection of Australia's oceans.

The AIMS communication team was recognised for excellence in communication at the Golden Target Awards in October 2023 for work on the previous year's launch of the annual report from the Long-Term Monitoring Program. This award from the Public Relations Institute of Australia, the peak body for the communications industry, acknowledged the team for their outstanding management and coordination of communications to deliver the best campaign of the year in the Small Budget category. The team presented clear information about the Reef's condition to ensure that it was reported as balanced and accurately as possible to key audiences.

The Great Barrier Reef

The 2023–24 summer saw substantial climate driven impacts across the Great Barrier Reef, with widespread coral bleaching, two cyclones and several severe flood events. For a quarter of the year, AIMS' communication team was focused on preparing and dealing with the communication issues from the mass coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef - the fifth such event since 2016 – which preceded ICRI's confirmation of a global mass bleaching event. Preparation for coral bleaching season involved a considerable amount of time collaborating, planning and executing the delivery of coordinated communication.

An analysis of AIMS media, web and social media presence during the bleaching period of 20 February to 6 May was carried out. AIMS was reported in 1350 articles in Australian news media, mostly via online news sites reaching a national audience of 25 million people.

Both the volume and quality of media coverage over the analysed period suggests AIMS was successful in boosting our profile, particularly in relation to coral bleaching monitoring and research. Media reporting was high in volume and overwhelmingly positive in tone. It presented AIMS prominently as a scientific authority, with almost three-quarters of coverage either explicitly or implicitly praising or promoting AIMS' research work. The role of climate change as the key threat to coral reefs in Australia and across the globe was discussed consistently in coverage of the bleaching events.

Science Communication

AIMS has promoted our large-scale, long-term and world-class research that helps governments, industry and the wider community to make informed decisions about Australia's marine estate. This was achieved through engagement with news and documentary film media, and through supporting the publication of scientific papers using AIMS' digital channels. AIMS hosted about 20 international media and film agencies to our sites and field work during 2023. In addition, proactive science communication highlights during the period were:

- The [Annual Reef Condition Report](#) of the Great Barrier Reef for 2022/23 showing a pause in recent coral recovery on much of the Reef.
- The announcement of the five-year, \$20 million [Blue Carbon Seascapes research project](#) exploring how a seaweed called Sargassum could reduce the severity of climate change by storing carbon in tropical seascapes.
- A milestone paper on [symbionts research](#) showing that adult coral can handle more heat through warmer oceans and keep growing due to heat evolved symbionts.
- A [paper](#) on the resilience of the remote Scott Reef off the north west coast of Western Australia highlighting the decades long data set produced by AIMS about that reef.
- A [paper](#) mapping the potential threats to iconic marine wildlife in the waters of Australia's north west.
- Information and images of AIMS' monitoring of the mass bleaching event unfolding on the Great Barrier Reef were published around the world, including on [BBC](#), the [New York Times](#) and [CNN](#).
- A [Conversation article](#) calling for a multi-pronged and global scientific approach to helping coral reefs survive climate change.
- Results from "out-of-season" coral spawning at AIMS's National Sea Simulator (SeaSim) in Townsville to successfully [breed](#) the next generation of captive-raised Great Barrier Reef corals outside of their natural reproductive window, months before the annual spawning season.

Other communications work during 2023-24 supported key projects and collaborations such as:

- Support to the Reef Resilience Symposium 2024 held in Cairns.

- Research on the effect of [seismic noise on pearl production](#) in adult oysters farmed in Australian waters through the North West Shoals to Shore Research Program.
- Scientists undertaking the [largest coral restoration research](#) trial to deliver 100,000 baby corals onto the Great Barrier Reef. This communicated a major milestone in AIMS' contribution to RRAP.
- The filming of the final Woppaburra Coral Project workshop showing the interactions between AIMS, BHP and the community. The video included interviews with representatives from the Woppaburra, AIMS and BHP, under the [Australian Coral Reef Resilience Initiative](#) (ACRRI).
- Delivery of ReefCloud - a digital platform with artificial intelligence (AI) that analyses underwater images of a coral reef - to the Philippines and Vietnam.
- A collaboration between AIMS and La Trobe University that could improve our photogrammetry processes of the Great Barrier Reef through a 3D digital twin. The photo realistic 3D images of reef sections to aid recovery and management efforts could be produced faster and more accurately.

The use of still and video imagery is an important capability to broaden audience reach and “bring” our research from the ocean direct to the public. A key part of the success of AIMS communication of the GBR mass bleaching event was the collection and dissemination of imagery. This allowed AIMS to provide evidence of the scale and variability of bleaching on the GBR. Imagery from AIMS field work was used by media across the globe. Imagery of acoustic research at Lizard Island for the Reef Song project into underwater soundscapes and fish noises, highlighted, before the 2024 bleaching event, our work to help turn degraded reefs into thriving coral reefs.

Corporate Communication

AIMS also supported the communication management of several key reports and actions that promoted or recognised the value of AIMS' science to the nation including:

- Celebration of the [ten year anniversary](#) of the National Sea Simulator – the world's most sophisticated research aquaria complex.
- The publication of the promotional document [AIMS in Focus](#) highlighted AIMS organisational and research achievements over the previous year.
- The 2024 [Reef Snapshot](#) was developed as a joint product with GBRMPA and CSIRO to provide a concise, easy-to-understand summary of what the Great Barrier Reef experienced over the summer.
- A third-party digital tool has been introduced for monitoring the social media landscape. It can conduct social listening and assist with analytics across several social media platforms and across tens of thousands of global news sources to provide a more contextual insight into social conversations and enable analysis of patterns in data. This tool was first used during the 2024 mass coral bleaching.
- AIMS Strategy 2025, that was launched in 2018, was updated. The [AIMS Strategy 2030](#) guides our research and investment in tropical marine science to inform decision-making for government and industry for this decade.

National Awareness and Reputation

To map progress on the AIMS Strategy 2030, a national familiarity survey was conducted in 2023 to provide a measure of Australian public awareness of AIMS against Strategy 2030 Reputation Target R2. It found:

- In the past year, more than two fifths of those familiar with AIMS indicated they feel more positively towards AIMS.
- Significant improvements of how AIMS communication is perceived:
 - communicates often (+6%)
 - communicates in a relevant way (+10%)
 - provides sufficient information about its activities (+8%)
 - appears genuine about what it says and what it stands for (+6%)
- In terms of supportive behaviours:
 - +5% increase in people saying they would trust AIMS to do the right thing (81%)
 - +11% increase in people saying they would say something positive about AIMS (82%)
- Two thirds of Australians familiar with AIMS have been exposed to us through at least one touchpoint (e.g. media, social media, web). The media coverage was the highest touchpoint - up 6% from the previous year meaning there has been greater news exposure of AIMS to respondents from the previous year.
- Awareness of AIMS provided an 8.1 point reputational boost among those who recalled recent information about AIMS compared to those people with no recent recall. This says people like us more when they hear more about us.

Building Indigenous Partnerships

AIMS recognises that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia are the Traditional Owners of the places where AIMS works both on land and sea, and we recognise their inherent rights, responsibilities and spiritual and cultural connection with their land and sea Country. This year, AIMS has continued to establish greater Indigenous engagement across the research portfolio to seek genuine partnerships with Traditional Owners in support of AIMS Strategy 2030, by implementing the principles within the Indigenous Partnerships Program. In particular, we have worked to create and socialise internal procedures to seek and document free prior and Informed consent for new projects and free informed consent for long-term ongoing projects, with the goal of achieving full compliance with the Indigenous Partnerships Policy by 2024-25.

The consent seeking process provides a platform for the development of genuine relationships between AIMS and Traditional Owners based on mutual understanding, trust and respect. This creates a solid foundation for development of research partnerships to share and generate knowledge to support sustainable use, protection and management of Australia's Sea Country. We have continued to expand cultural appreciation training delivered to AIMS staff, to improve cultural competency across the organization, establish greater cultural capacity for Indigenous engagement and partnership projects, and promote a culturally safe environment for Indigenous staff.

AIMS' approach to Indigenous Partnerships continues to grow in reputation and influence other organisations. AIMS staff contributed to the National Indigenous Australians Agency inter-jurisdictional working group for the national ranger sector strategy; IP Australia's Indigenous Knowledge Working Group; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's First Nations Taskforce supporting the Ambassador for First Nations People; the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation's Indigenous Reference Group; and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's Traditional Owner Technical Working Groups. The Indigenous Partnerships team hosted visits from the Ambassador for First Nations People and the CEO of Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and team members gave keynote addresses to two national conferences. True to our policy commitment of holding our partners and collaborators to the same standards, the Indigenous Partnerships Team works closely with collaborators including across the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program, to assist in their compliance with the AIMS policy.

This year, we also continued to contribute to the development of technologies and data platforms that enable Traditional Owners to monitor sea Country. The Northern Australian Marine Monitoring Alliance (NAMMA) is establishing an alliance between AIMS and Traditional Owners across northern Australia to collaborate in Traditional Owner led marine monitoring. The focus to-date has been on three demonstration projects with Bardi-Jawi (Kimberley), Anindilyakwa (Groote Eylandt) and Meriam Nation (Mer, Ugar and Erub in eastern Torres Strait), to validate methodology and establish fit-for-purpose standard operating procedures and training protocols. All projects have involved training and capacity building in monitoring technology and methodology, co-design and co-delivery of monitoring activities, and reporting of results to community to inform monitoring targets in the respective sea Country plans. The Torres Strait project has identified a significant Crown-of-Thorns Starfish outbreak which has informed current management actions to control starfish numbers. AIMS has also continued marine monitoring collaborations with Thamarrur and Bawinanga Rangers in the Northern Territory, including training, capacity building, and co-delivery of surveys of fish and benthic communities. Two-way knowledge sharing is a core goal in monitoring partnerships with Traditional Owners generously sharing their stories and knowledge of biocultural values of the survey areas, beyond ecological values that our scientists are used to engaging with.

We have also engaged with Indigenous youth to promote and encourage pathways in marine science. We sponsor the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in Marine Science (ATSIMS) initiative in conjunction with partners in marine science, education and biological conservation, and this year welcomed 90 young ATSIMS scholars to AIMS. Through AIMS@JCU, AIMS also supports two initiatives: a marine science 'faculty' within James Cook University's 'Winter School' encourages university pathways in marine science for year 10-12 Indigenous students from across Australia; and marine science internships at AIMS for JCU enrolled Indigenous marine science undergraduates provide paid work experience and mentorship to support academic success and future career pathways.

We have continued to grow the application of our research and operations as a platform for meaningful Indigenous training and capacity building. After winning additional funding through the Reef Trust Partnership, we have commenced a 3 year \$3 million project to develop training in reef restoration intervention methods and deliver these to a pilot cohort of Great Barrier Reef Indigenous rangers. We have also developed training modules linked to units of competency in the vocational education and training sector for marine monitoring methods.

Research Infrastructure

Our research focuses on Australia’s tropical marine environments, from the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef and across the north of the country to Shark Bay and the Abrolhos Islands in the west. Field activities are underpinned by laboratory, support and administrative facilities located in Townsville, Darwin, Perth and Canberra.

Our major research infrastructure is subject to detailed capital planning and asset management to ensure our facilities and equipment are safe, reliable, available and functionally aligned with current and future needs. Delivery against preventive maintenance and capital investment plans is monitored throughout the year to ensure that targeted outcomes are met.

Table 5: AIMS research infrastructure

Description	Capability	Co Located Partners
Cape Ferguson Campus 50 km from Townsville in North Queensland	National Sea Simulator – the world’s most advanced aquaria facility Coral core library Genetics and PC2 laboratories General laboratories Specialised electrical, electronic and mechanical workshops Water-side marine operations facilities Small research vessel fleet	James Cook University (AIMS@JCU) Bureau of Meteorology Geoscience Australia (GA)
Arafura Timor Research Facility Located at Australian National University Campus in Darwin	Research aquarium facility General laboratories Small research vessels	Charles Darwin University (AIMS@CDU) Australian National University
Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre Located at University of Western Australia Campus	General laboratories	CSIRO University of Western Australian (AIMS@UWA) Institute of Marine Science WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
RV <i>Solander</i> AIMS Vessel Facility located in South Townsville Operates between Exmouth (WA) and Southern GBR	35 metre 12 researchers 28 day / 3,000 nm endurance	
RV <i>Cape Ferguson</i> AIMS Vessel Facility located in South Townsville Operates on GBR	24 metre 8 researchers 14 day / 3,500 nm endurance	

Field operations

Our field activities are supported by a research fleet—two large, well-equipped research vessels, the RV *Cape Ferguson* and the RV *Solander*— and several smaller vessels, capable of safely carrying researchers to remote, diverse habitats across Australia’s tropical waters. About half of all trips on the RV *Cape Ferguson* and RV *Solander* involved researchers from collaborating organisations. The AIMS field program provides essential science for Australia and lies at the core of who we are as an organisation.

The demand for research time on AIMS' vessels exceeds their capacity. To meet this demand, AIMS typically charts an additional 150 days of large vessel time plus numerous supplementary small vessel charters each year. In 2023-24, AIMS continued to work with Riverside Marine, a Queensland based vessel operator that supported the operation of our large research vessels and responded to additional demand from the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program.

Through careful management of ongoing COVID disruptions, our approach has maintained the health and well-being of our people while keeping important scientific research functioning and has resulted in minimal impact on our field-going capacity during 2023-24.

Field Operations



Figure 7: Field operations statistics

National Sea Simulator

The National Sea Simulator (SeaSim) is a globally unique marine experimental aquarium facility that provides researchers with unprecedented control of environmental parameters, allowing investigation of individual and combined effects of variables on tropical marine ecosystems and organisms, over multiple generations.

The SeaSim has delivered a significant uplift in experimental capability and is essential for the success of many of our research programs, boasting a number of unique capabilities developed by our staff to assist researchers:

- full solar spectrum lighting with the ability to dynamically manipulate intensity and spectrum to model natural lighting conditions as found in the marine environment (e.g., light attenuation caused by sediment plumes from dredging operations, plankton blooms or cloud cover)
- 18 large, fully independent mesocosm systems with the ability to provide daily, monthly and seasonal patterns of light, temperature and pCO₂
- sophisticated climate change and ocean acidification systems with tightly controlled temperature ($\pm 0.1^{\circ}\text{C}$) and diel pCO₂
- large-scale systems for coral spawning, larval rearing, settlement and long-term grow out
- innovative flow-through contaminant dosing systems for ecotoxicology research on priority contaminants.

These capabilities have been applied to a range of high-priority research areas, including climate change and ocean acidification, reef restoration and adaptation, impacts of dredging, pest management and impacts of contaminants.

The evolution of the SeaSim to expand in capacity is underpinned through the \$42.7 million SeaSim Expansion project, which included a contribution of \$36.6 million from the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS).

Construction began in December 2022, with completion of additional experimental spaces completed in August 2024. Access to the SeaSim's unique capability is available to national and international scientists and research institutions from around the world. During 2024-25 the SeaSim will transition to operate as a national facility, with a portion of the experimental space made available for funded, merit-based access for research of national and international significance. The SeaSim provides a facility that promotes and fosters collaboration; we work closely with national and international collaborators, with over 80 per cent of all experiments in the SeaSim involving external collaborators. In 2023-24, SeaSim has supported researchers from 13 different national and international organisations.

Out of season coral spawning

The spawning of corals in the SeaSim at a time outside of their natural spawning season has continued, supporting many projects in this important area. Housed in a special facility where the environmental conditions, daylight and lunar cycles have been phase-shifted, corals have been induced to spawn five months and four hours earlier than corals in the natural environment. These corals, most of which have spent their whole lives in the SeaSim, spawned when expected 4 – 10 days after the simulated full moon. Nearly 50 colonies from six different species have spawned producing >500,000 larvae which are now supporting several research projects in the SeaSim. This is a key research area, providing significant benefits for projects investigating early life stages of corals, particularly projects within RRAP, leading to increasing rates of research and method development. An expansion of this area is being developed to provide greater opportunities to advance knowledge in the early life stages of coral, essential for understanding bottlenecks in coral recruitment on the reef.



Figure 8: Statistics showing use of SeaSim for coral propagation research, 2023-24

Projects undertaken in SeaSim have attracted funding from a range of sources including industry partners, universities, the Australian Research Council, the National Environmental Science Program, BHP, the Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, the Moore Foundation and the Paul G. Allen Philanthropies.

Collaborating organisations include CSIRO, Southern Cross University, James Cook University, University of Melbourne, Deakin University, University of Queensland, Taronga Conservation Society, Griffith University, University of Western Australia, University of Technology Sydney, Curtin University, University of Sydney, Sunshine Coast University, University of New South Wales and Queensland University of Technology.

During 2023-24 AIMS has undertaken significant upgrades to the large tank outdoor space with a new ethylene tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE) roof and development of large experimental tanks providing new, additional capability to the facility. Over the next three years this space will be utilised by GBRMPA to hold corals, fish and other organisms while their ReefHQ facility is rebuilt.

Revenue

AIMS' operations were supported by a mix of Australian Government appropriation funding, non-appropriation funding from state and territory governments, competitive research funds, environmental regulators and the private sector.

Total revenue for 2023-24 was \$165.124 million, \$49.582 million (43 per cent) more than 2022-23 (Figure 9). The increase was due to:

- \$36.926 million increase in appropriation funding received to support AIMS' financial sustainability;
- \$5.634 million increase in interest income; and
- \$11.466 million increase in the recognition of revenues provided by the Department of Education for the construction and operation of the National Sea Simulator.

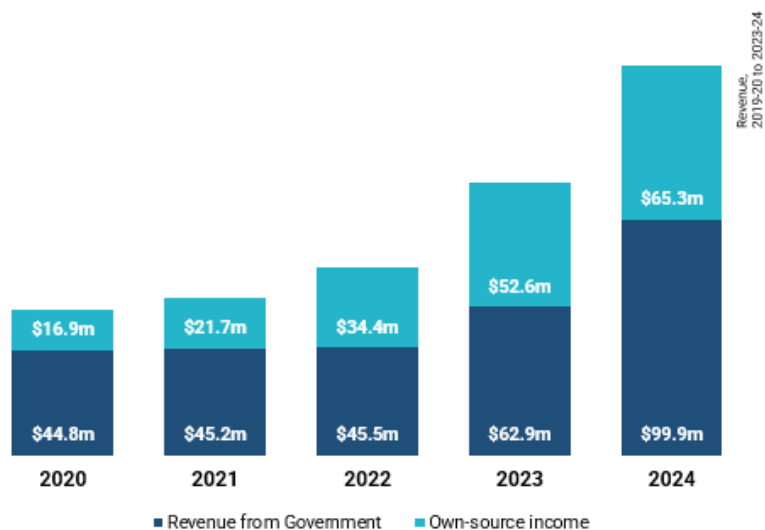


Figure 9: AIMS revenue, 2019-20 to 2023-24

External Revenue

In addition to appropriation funding, AIMS has contracts with Australian Government departments and agencies, Australian and international industry partners, and Australian and international philanthropic partners. External funding is critical as it ensures that AIMS can maintain its present level of scientific research. AIMS’ own source revenue for the year was \$52.830 million (46 per cent) of total revenue (2023: 43 per cent) (Figure 10).

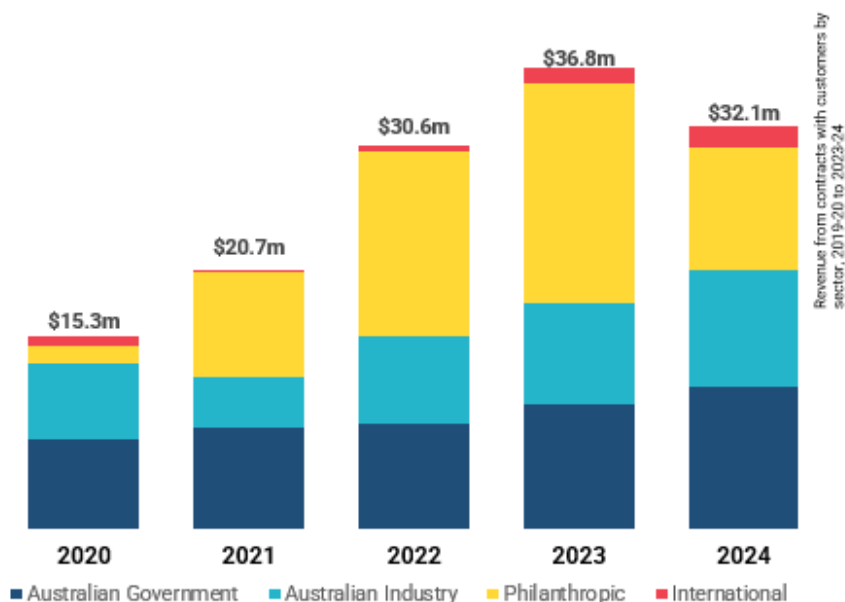


Figure 10: Revenue from contracts with customers by sector, 2019-20 to 2023-24

In support of Strategy 2030, AIMS has built strategic alliances, working with our stakeholders to develop multi-year programs of work that provide solutions and address challenges at regional and national scales. This has enabled the leverage of our strategic science work with industry and philanthropy, broadening the external revenue opportunities and moving away from individual smaller discrete pieces of revenue earning work.

Sources of External Revenues for 2023-24

AIMS sourced \$30.341 million (95 per cent) of its external revenues from Australian sources. Australian Government departments and agencies, and Australian industry partners together provided 64 per cent of AIMS external revenues for the year (Figure 11).

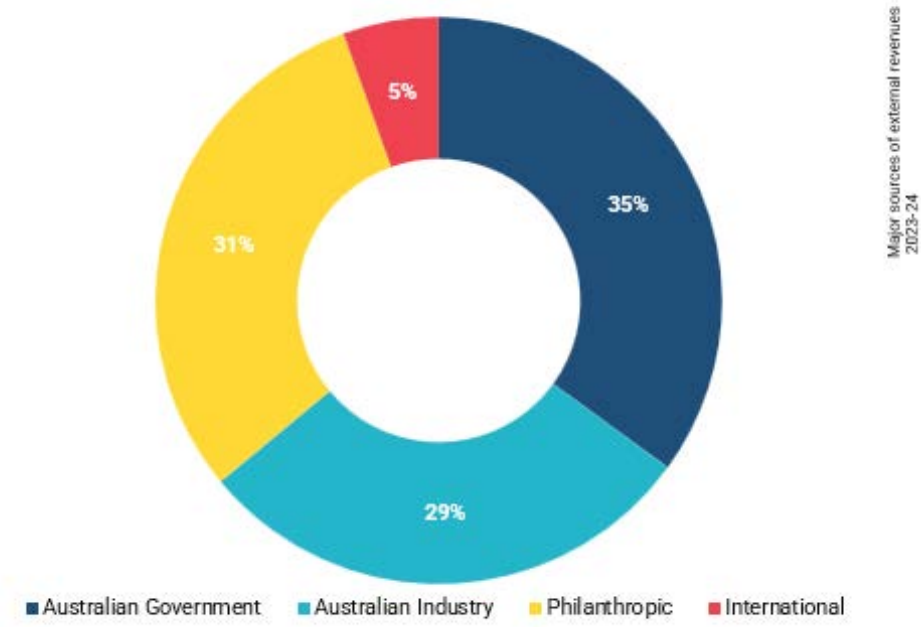


Figure 11: Major sources of external revenue, 2023-24

Part 3: Management and Accountability

Government Engagement

AIMS has a comprehensive system of financial reporting practices that provide compliance, disclosure and accountability of its activities.

Role and Legislation

AIMS was established by the Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972 (AIMS Act) and is a corporate Commonwealth entity under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act).

The Institute's functions and powers are set out in the AIMS Act.² AIMS has two main roles under its governing legislation:

- carry out research and development in relation to marine science and marine technology
- encourage and facilitate the non-commercial and commercial application of the results arising from such activities.

The PGPA Act sets out reporting, accountability and other requirements relating to our operations, management and governance. Section 39 of the PGPA Act requires corporate Commonwealth entities to prepare annual performance statements and to include them in an annual report to the Australian Parliament. The Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 sets out the requirements for annual reports to be produced by corporate Commonwealth entities in accordance with s. 46 of the PGPA Act. A list of annual report requirements provides details of how this annual report meets those requirements is provided in Part 6.

Responsible Minister

As at 30 June 2024, the responsible minister for AIMS was the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water. There were no other responsible ministers over the 2023-24 period.

General Policies of the Australian Government

Under s. 22 of the PGPA Act, the Finance Minister may make a government policy order that specifies a policy of the Australian Government that is to apply in relation to one or more corporate Commonwealth entities. No ministerial directions were received by the AIMS Council during 2023-24.

No companies, trusts or partnerships were formed by AIMS during 2023-24.

² The Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972 is available on the Federal Register of Legislation website: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C01009>

Governance

AIMS Council

AIMS is governed by a Council that reports to the relevant Minister. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the Institute.

Role of Council

The AIMS Council sets AIMS' key objectives and research strategies and oversees management. The Council advises the Minister and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of AIMS' progress against the targets outlined in the AIMS Strategy 2030, its Portfolio Budget Statements and AIMS' annual Corporate Plan. The Minister is also provided with advice on developments of significance, as appropriate.

The PGPA Act requires the AIMS Council, as the accountable authority of AIMS, to comply with the following specific duties:

- to lead, govern and set the strategic direction of the Commonwealth entity
- to establish and maintain systems relating to risk and internal controls
- to encourage cooperation with others to achieve common objectives
- to take into account the effects of imposing requirements on others
- to keep the responsible minister and the Finance Minister informed.

Council membership

The AIMS Council consists of a Chair, AIMS CEO, a member nominated by James Cook University, and four other members. The AIMS Act requires that at least three members of the Council have scientific qualifications. All members of the Council, with the exception of the CEO, are non-executive appointments made by the Governor-General on the nomination of the Minister. Appointments can be up to five years and reappointment is permissible. The CEO is appointed by the Council for a period not exceeding five years and is eligible for reappointment.

Council members as at 30 June 2024 were: Professor Erika Techera, Dr Beth Woods OAM (Chair), Prof Simon Biggs (JCU Representative), Patricia Kelly PSM, Stephen Duffield, Prof Peter Steinberg and Prof Selina Stead.

Former Council members during the 2023-24 period were: Basil Ahyick (a/CEO), Dr Thomas Barlow, Dr Paul Hardisty (CEO).

Biographical information of AIMS Council Members is provided below.

Dr Erika Techera LLB (Hons), PG Cert Higher Ed, M Env Law, LLM, PhD, FAAL, GAICD

Council Member: 16 March 2020 – 15 March 2025

Dr Techera has over 25 years' experience in law, legal practice and academic legal research. She is a specialist in international and comparative environmental law and marine environmental governance with a strong commitment to sustainable development. Dr Techera is a Professor of Law and has held a variety of senior leadership roles in the university sector. She has expertise in strategic leadership, governance and management having led a flagship, multidisciplinary research institute and a University Faculty of Law. She formerly practised as a Barrister in Sydney for over seven years and prior to this, was Director of a small litigation support business.

Dr Techera has been a member of the Board of Western Australian Maritime Museum Advisory Committee since mid-2018, and in 2020 joined the Heritage Council of Western Australia.

Dr Techera is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.

Dr Beth Woods OAM B Agric Sci (Hons 1), D Phil (Oxon), Hon Doc UQ, FTSE MAICD

Council Chair: 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2027

Dr Woods is the recently retired Director-General of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries where she led development initiatives to deliver an innovative, productive and sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector.

Previously Dr Woods was the foundation Director of the University of Queensland Rural Extension Centre, and Professor of Agribusiness at UQ from 1997-2004. Beth has served on boards and committees including for the Grains Research & Development Corporation, the CSIRO Board, the Gatton College Council and the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority Board (now QRIDA). She chaired RIRDC (now AgriFutures), ACIAR, a National Drought Policy Review, the International Rice Research Institute and WorldFish.

She is currently a Commissioner for International Agricultural Research with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, Chair of the Board of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, and a member of the National Marine Facilities Steering Committee.

Professor Simon Biggs BSc (Hons), PhD, FEng, FTSE, CEng FICHEM, FIEAust, FRSC

Council Member: 3 March 2022 to 13 February 2027

Professor Simon Biggs commenced his appointment as Vice Chancellor and President of James Cook University Australia in February 2022. He is responsible for ensuring clear and effective leadership and management of the University across all operating sites, including campuses in Cairns, Townsville and Singapore.

Educated at the University of Bristol in the UK, Professor Biggs holds a PhD in Colloid Science.

Professor Biggs' main research interests are in the field of colloid and interface engineering. He was the chief investigator on numerous research projects and has authored more than 270 refereed publications as well as being named on over 20 patents.

Professor Biggs is an experienced board member with numerous appointments in both Australia and the UK over the last 20 years. He was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2011 and in 2016, as a Fellow of the Australian Academy for Technological Sciences and Engineering.

Patricia Kelly PSM, GAICD

Council member: 6 July 2023 to 5 July 2028

Ms Kelly has substantial experience in strategy and policy formulation for science and research. She was a Deputy Secretary in Commonwealth departments responsible for industry, science and innovation from 2004 -2013, where her responsibilities included science policy, national research agencies, international science engagement and major research infrastructure programs. Between 2013 and 2018 she was Director-General of IP Australia (the Australian patent and trade mark office). She brings significant experience in public administration and governance to the Council.

Ms Kelly is currently Deputy Chancellor at the University of Canberra and chairs Co-operative Research Australia, the National Youth Science Forum and the Australian Square Kilometre Array Regional Centre. She is a Director of DMTC Ltd. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a major in communication and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Stephen Duffield BBus, GradDip (Management), MBA, FAIM, GAICD

Council member: 13 December 2023 to 12 December 2028

Stephen has been involved with the Hydrographic and Marine Geophysics industry for over 30 years both in Australia and internationally. Stephen has served in leadership roles in the companies, starting in Finance and then moving to General and Strategic management roles. These roles include Regional Financial Controller Racal Survey, Managing Director for Thales Geosolutions and Country Manager for Fugro and being one of the founding shareholders and director for Guardian Geomatics.

Stephen is currently the President of the Australasian Hydrographic Society and a Council member of the Society of Underwater Technology. In the past, Stephen served on the Advisory Board of the Centre for Marine Science Technology (Curtin University) and on the Board of The International Federation of Hydrographic Societies.

Professor Peter Steinberg BSc, PhD

Council member: 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2028

Peter Steinberg is Emeritus Professor of Biology at UNSW Sydney, retiring in 2021 after 30 years at UNSW. From 2009-2020 he was the inaugural Director and CEO of the multi-university Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS). His interests in marine science include coastal ecology and habitat restoration, environmental microbiology, and marine conservation and management.

Professor Steinberg has been a Fulbright Scholar, a Queen Elizabeth II Fellow and CEO of an ASX listed biotechnology company. Awards for Peter's achievements include the Australian Marine Science Association's Silver Jubilee Award in 2017 for outstanding contributions to Australian marine sciences and the 2021 NSW Premier's Science and Engineering Prize for Biological Sciences (Environmental). He is a Web of Science highly cited researcher (2020 – 23), awarded to the top 1% of researchers globally.

Peter has extensive leadership and governance experience in marine science and related fields. He currently chairs the Research Advisory Committee for the nation's main oceanographic research vessel, the R/V Investigator, and is a member of the Marine Estate Expert Advisory Panel (MEEKP) for the NSW Government. He is on the Board of Ocean Impact Organisation (OIO), a NFP start-up accelerator/incubator in the marine technology space.

Professor Selina Stead BSc, MSc, PhD

CEO and Council member: 1 February 2024 to 31 January 2029

Professor Selina Stead is a marine biologist and environmental scientist with expertise in coral reef ecosystems, aquaculture, fisheries, environmental governance and science policy. She has enjoyed an active dual career in academia and government.

Selina's last roles have been as Executive Dean for the Faculty of Environment at the University of Leeds and the UK Government's Chief Scientific Adviser for the Marine Management Organisation. Her research focuses on biodiversity conservation, climate change, food insecurity and sustainability, which spans the Caribbean, East Africa, Europe, Middle East, SE Asia and the UK.

She has a Personal Professorship of Marine Governance and Environmental Science from Newcastle University in the UK where she acted as Dean of Research and is a Fellow of the Alan Turing Institute.

Previously she has served as Chair and Non-Executive Director of the Scottish Government's Science Advisory Board and Ministerial Appointed Scientific Fisheries Advisor. Selina was President of the European Aquaculture Society and her research on climate-smart seafood and conservation was recognised with their highest honour, the Distinguished Services Award.

Selina is a member of Science Advisory Panels for Australia's Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre and the Plant and Food Forum, New Zealand. She holds a BSc in Marine Biology and Oceanography, MSc in Fisheries Biology and Management and a PhD in Zoology.

Basil Ahyick BBus, FCPA, GAICD

Acting CEO and Council member: 31 July 2023 to 31 January 2024

Mr Ahyick was appointed to be the acting Chief Executive Officer from 31 July 2023. He joined AIMS in January 2016 as the Chief Finance Officer and Corporate Services Manager responsible for Finance, Human Resources, ICT, Business Development, Legal Services, Project Management Office and Information Services. During this time he led AIMS' leadership and culture program and coordinated the strategic direction and financial planning of the business.

Mr Ahyick has a strong and varied industry background spanning 30 years, including 17 years with BHP Billiton, leading the BHP and Billiton Merger Integration and working in senior management positions, contributing both his business acumen and strategic leadership and planning across corporate, treasury, petroleum, steel, iron ore, nickel, and shared services. He attended Harvard Business School's Driving Corporate Performance program where he spent time honing skills in strategy execution and leading a strong culture.

Dr Thomas William Barlow, BSc (Hons), DPhil

Council Member: 11 March 2020 to 31 December 2023

Dr Barlow serves as an adviser on knowledge investment, research policy, and analytics to a range of technology-intensive companies, government agencies, and universities globally. He previously served a five-year term as an independent member on the Board of the National Computational Infrastructure and is currently also on the Board of the Australian National Imaging Facility.

Dr Barlow is the author of three books on science and innovation, and publisher of the Barlow Report, a biennial resource for higher education institutions in Australia and East Asia.

Dr Barlow has previously worked as a weekly columnist for the Financial Times newspaper in London. He has also been the science policy adviser to the Minister for Education, Science and Training in the Australian Government. He started his career as a computational and theoretical chemist.

Dr Paul Hardisty MSc, P.Eng, FIEAust

CEO and Council member: 24 July 2017 to 1 December 2023

Dr Hardisty, a recognised thought leader and sought-after speaker in his field, was CEO of AIMS from July 2017 to December 2023.

An engineer who has worked extensively in marine and coastal environments and marine research projects, he is experienced in both the public and private sectors.

Dr Hardisty co-founded international environmental consultancy Komex Environmental Ltd, which he developed from a start-up to a \$50 million-a-year company with 1000 employees. More recently, he was director at CSIRO's Climate Adaptation Flagship, and business unit director in CSIRO's Land and Water division.

Dr Hardisty holds a Master in Hydrology, and a Doctorate in Environmental Engineering from Imperial College, London. He is an adjunct Professor at The University of Western Australia.

Council attendance

Table 6: Attendance at Council meetings, 2023-24

Attendance	29 Aug 2023	26 Oct 2023	12 Dec 2023	29 Feb 2024	23 Apr 2024	25 Jun 2024
Dr Beth Woods	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Professor Simon Biggs	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Dr Erika Techera	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Patricia Kelly	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Dr Thomas Barlow	yes	yes	yes	n/a	n/a	n/a
Stephen Duffield	n/a	n/a	n/a	yes	yes	yes
Prof Peter Steinberg	n/a	n/a	n/a	no	yes	yes
Prof Selina Stead	n/a	n/a	n/a	yes	yes	yes
Dr Paul Hardisty	no	no	no	n/a	n/a	n/a
Basil Ahyick	yes	yes	yes	n/a	n/a	n/a

Education and performance review processes for Council members

At induction, Council members are provided with a comprehensive set of documents including the PGPA Act, AIMS Act, AIMS Strategy 2030, Corporate Plan, Risk Management Framework and key plans and policies including the Business Continuity Plan, Enterprise Agreement and Fraud and Corruption Control Plan.

Council members are encouraged to maintain their membership with the Australian Institute of Company Directors. The performance of Council members is reviewed regularly through a self-assessment process and, as required, by external review.

Ethics

Council members are briefed on—and are required to sign—the AIMS Code of Conduct.

Disclosure of interests

Section 29 of the PGPA Act provides for the disclosure of material personal interests in a matter that is being considered by the Council, and prohibits participation, deliberation and decision making by any member on such matters, unless so resolved by the Council or entitled by the Minister. Details of such disclosure are recorded in the minutes of Council meetings. All these requirements are currently being met.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is a formal sub-committee of the Council that meets quarterly. Audit Committee members in 2023-24 were:

- Peter Bell (Independent Committee Chair)
- David Hinton (Independent Committee Member)
- Patricia Kelly PSM (Council Member on Audit Committee from 1 October 2023)
- Jeanette Roberts (Independent Committee Member from 25 July 2023 to 30 September 2023)

The AIMS CEO, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Finance Manager, representatives of the Australian National Audit Office, and an internal auditor, attend all meetings or relevant parts of all meetings, by invitation.

In accordance with best practice, all Council members may receive copies of the Audit Committee agenda and meeting minutes and can attend meetings as a right.

The Committee Chair attends relevant sections of Council meetings.

The Audit Committee is responsible for providing independent assurance and assistance to Council on:

- financial reporting
- performance reporting
- systems of risk oversight and management
- systems of internal control
- internal audit
- external audit.

Four full meetings of the committee were held during 2023-24. The committee's charter is available at <https://www.aims.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/Audit%20Committee%20Charter.pdf>

Audit Committee Skills and Experience

Peter Bell (BSc (Econ), CIPFA, FCPA, IIA)- Independent Committee Chair from 25 October 2022

Peter has more than 30 years' experience in internal audit, external audit, performance audit and risk management. This has included senior roles in the federal government for the Australian National Audit Office and Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and as a Partner in Ernst & Young and Managing Director or Protiviti. Peter is also a member of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMPA) Audit Committee.

David Hinton (B.Bus, FCA, FGIA, GAICD) – Independent member from 24 October 2022

David is an experienced non-executive director in the life science and technology sectors. He has been involved in the establishment of financial and governance structures and the development of strategy in a rapidly changing environment. His recently concluded executive career included Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary of a leading IT solutions provider and a national telecommunications provider.

Jeanette Roberts BE(Hons), CEng, FIChemE – Independent member from 25 July 2023 to 30 September 2023

Ms Roberts is a chemical engineer and a senior executive with more than 40 years' international experience in the oil and gas industry, including in China, India, Russia, Africa, Europe and the Asia-Pacific.

A director of her own company, Jeanette Roberts Consulting, she has major global merger and acquisitions experience, including divestments, global restructures, risk management and governance.

Ms Roberts has worked on policy development at both state and Commonwealth level, as well as in the research sector, building partnerships and collaboration frameworks, particularly around marine environments and sustainable development.

She has worked for oil and gas operators and service companies both in Australia and internationally.

Patricia Kelly PSM – Committee member from 1 October 2023

Skills and experience of Ms Patricia Kelly PSM (AIMS Council Member and Audit Committee Member) included with Council Member biographies.

Audit Committee Remuneration

- Peter Bell - Independent Committee Chair: \$17,800
- David Hinton – Independent member: \$6,500
- Patricia Kelly PSM– Council Member and Audit Committee Member from 1 October 2023 to be backdated and paid in 2024/25
- Jeanette Roberts – Independent member from 25 July 2023 to 30 September 2023: \$2,000.

Audit Committee Attendance

Table 7: Attendance at Audit Committee meetings, 2023-24

Attendance	8 Aug 2023	8 Nov 2023	12 Mar 2024	28 May 2024
Peter Bell (Independent Committee Chair)	yes	yes	yes	yes
David Hinton (Independent member)	yes	yes	yes	no
Patricia Kelly PSM (Council Member on Audit Committee from 1 October 2023)	n/a	yes	yes	yes
Jeanette Roberts (Independent member from 25 July to 30 September 2023)	yes	n/a	n/a	n/a

Remuneration and Nominations Committee

The Remuneration and Nominations Committee is a sub-committee of the Council which provides advice to Council regarding the remuneration of senior AIMS staff and recommends nominations for Council membership. The Committee reviews the employment arrangements of the Council, of the CEO, and of AIMS employees not covered by the AIMS Enterprise Agreement. On an annual basis, the Committee reviews AIMS' reporting arrangements to ensure that AIMS is adhering to the administrative requirements of the Remuneration Tribunal. Remuneration of AIMS employees not covered by the AIMS Enterprise Agreement is determined having regard to the Government's Workplace Relations Bargaining Policy and relativity of comparable positions within AIMS, the Australian Public Service and the wider employment market. Council member and CEO remuneration is in accordance with the directions of the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal.

The Committee comprises of at least three Council members, appointed by the Council. Committee members during 2023-24 were Dr Thomas Barlow, Prof Simon Biggs, Dr Erika Techera and Dr Beth Woods.

Independent professional advice

The Council has the right to obtain, at AIMS' expense, relevant independent professional advice in connection with the discharge of its responsibilities. The Council sought advice during 2023-24 in relation to a range of matters.

Fraud Control

AIMS remains committed to mitigating incidences of fraud and managing risks. AIMS has developed a Fraud Control Plan using the Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework 2017 and in adherence to s.10 of the PGPA Rule 2014. AIMS reports its fraud data to the Australian Institute of Criminology by 30 September each year.

Financial Reporting

AIMS' financial statements are prepared in accordance with:

- Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015 (FRR);
- Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations – Reduced Disclosure Requirements issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board that apply for the reporting period; and
- The financial statements notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The financial statements are accompanied by a signed statement by the Accountable Authority, CEO and CFO, declaring that the statements comply with the accounting standards and any other requirements prescribed by the FRR and present fairly the entity's financial position, financial performance and cash flows in accordance with s. 42 of the PGPA Act.

Performance Reporting

Section 39 of the PGPA Act requires an annual performance statement to be provided by corporate Commonwealth entities. AIMS' annual performance statement for 2023-24 is provided in *Results and Commentary on Performance*.

Systems of Risk Oversight and Management

Under s. 17(2) (c) of the PGPA Rule, the Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing the Institute's risk framework (and monitoring management's compliance with that framework) and making recommendations to the Council to address any significant issues raised.

System of Internal Audit Control

The Audit Committee's responsibilities include reviewing the Audit Plan and internal audit reports, and also making recommendations to the Council and management to address any significant issues raised. The committee also reviews whether the internal audit coverage aligns with AIMS' key risks. O'Connor Marsden were engaged to undertake an independent review AIMS' risk and assurance framework and complete limited control testing for three key business process areas: permit and approval processes, project management and financial monitoring and reporting. AIMS has commenced the process to appoint a new internal auditor for the coming year. The internal auditor is responsible for independently reviewing risk in accordance with the AIMS Corporate Plan.

External Audit

Under s. 43 of the PGPA Act, the Commonwealth Auditor-General, through the ANAO, is the external auditor for the Institute. The Audit Committee reviewed the ANAO Audit Plan and reported to, and met with, ANAO representatives before recommending to the Council that the annual financial statements be accepted, and the Statement by Council be signed.

Risk Management

AIMS has a comprehensive corporate risk management framework and strategy, which includes processes to identify and assess new risks to AIMS, and to monitor and refine existing risks and control measures. Additionally, project and operational risk management is established across the Institute, with processes, procedures and systems of work in place, including managing workplace health and safety risks. We participate in the annual Comcover risk management benchmarking survey.

Investing and Financing Activities

AIMS invested its surplus money in accordance with s. 59 of the PGPA Act and AIMS' policy on investments.

Related Parties

AIMS transacts with Australian Government related entities consistent with normal day-to-day business operations provided under normal terms and conditions, including the purchase and rendering of science services (refer to section 3.3 of the Financial Statements).

The AIMS Council delegates decision making for related party contracts up to \$5 million to the AIMS CEO. The AIMS Council retains decision making for any contracts greater than \$5 million. The AIMS Council reviews a schedule of contracts entered into by AIMS annually. Any AIMS Officer who may have a perceived or real conflict of interest relating to any contract is required to declare the conflict and is not involved in the decision making.

Indemnities and Insurance Premiums for Officers

There were no liabilities to any current or former officials of AIMS during the reporting period. No premium was paid (or was agreed to be paid) against a current or former official's liability for legal costs. AIMS paid \$23,891 in premiums for Directors' and Officers' Liability insurance in 2023-24.

Compliance

AIMS conducted its affairs in accordance with the requirements of all applicable laws and regulations, including the PGPA Act and prescribed rules, the applicable policies of the Australian Government, and the internal policies of AIMS. Any government policy orders notified as being applicable to AIMS would be duly complied with (s. 22(3), PGPA Act). There were no policy orders applied to AIMS in 2023-24.

Duty to Inform and Ministerial Notifications

The AIMS Council is required to notify the responsible minister of any significant issue that has affected AIMS (s. 19(1)(e), PGPA Act). There were no significant issues requiring notification to the responsible minister during 2023-24 relating to non-compliance with finance law.

Consultancy Services

AIMS engages individuals and companies as external consultants from time to time where it lacks specialist expertise or when independent research, review or assessment is required.

Consultants are engaged to investigate or diagnose a defined issue or problem, carry out defined reviews or evaluations, or provide independent advice, information, or creative solutions to assist in AIMS' decision making.

Decisions to engage consultants take into consideration the skills and resources required for the task, the skills, or resources available internally and the cost-effectiveness of these options. The engagement of a consultant is made in accordance with our Procurement policies and procedures and other relevant internal policies. AIMS spent \$7.230 million (excluding GST) on consultancies during 2023-24.

Public Accountability

Judicial decisions and reviews by administrative tribunals

No judicial decisions relating to AIMS were handed down during 2023-24.

Commonwealth Ombudsman

No reports relating to AIMS were given by the Commonwealth Ombudsman during 2023-2024.

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

No reports relating to AIMS were given by the Australian Information Commissioner during 2023-2024.

Parliamentary Committees

No reports were produced on the operations of AIMS by a parliamentary committee during 2023-24.

Auditor-General

No reports were produced on the operations of AIMS by the Auditor-General during 2023-24.

Service Charter

AIMS' service charter outlines the standards it commits to regarding management of our relationships, a copy of which is posted on our website. AIMS actively seek and welcome feedback on our performance against our service standards. The charter and details on how to provide feedback can be found at <https://www.aims.gov.au/docs/about/corporate/service-charter.html>

Privacy Act 1988

To ensure the proper management, administration and safety of its officers, employees, visitors, volunteers and contractors, AIMS is required to collect personal, and occasionally sensitive, information. AIMS is committed to the Australian Privacy Principles contained within the *Privacy Act 1988* and has formal processes to manage privacy, as detailed in the AIMS Privacy Policy. AIMS has a Privacy Officer (privacy@aims.gov.au) who is responsible for ensuring that the Institute's Privacy Policy is adhered to and that AIMS complies with all applicable statutory requirements.

Freedom Of Information (FOI)

Freedom Of Information (FOI) requests, reviews, decisions and statements

AIMS received one (1) request for documents under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) during 2023-2024.

AIMS received no applications during 2023-2024:

- for internal review of decisions made under the FOI Act
- for external review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal of decisions made under the FOI Act
- to amend any records under the FOI Act.

FOI Operations

Agencies subject to the FOI Act are required to make information available to the public as part of the Information Publication Scheme (IPS). Under their IPS, each agency must display on its website a plan showing what information it publishes in accordance with the IPS requirements in Part II of the FOI Act.

The documents listed in our IPS Agency Plan are generally freely available to any person requesting them. The availability of other information is subject to assessment, which is made on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FOI Act, as supplemented and explained in the relevant fact sheets, guidelines and other materials published on the website of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). The grounds for assessment include considerations of commercial confidentiality, legal professional privilege and personal privacy. The FOI Act and the above website explain these, the other unconditional exemptions and the conditional exemptions as contained in the current legislation.

Requests for any such information from AIMS must be made in writing, addressed to the relevant person, and must contain the information set out under 'How to make an FOI request' on the above website. The request should be addressed to the FOI contact officer at the address given below. There is no fee payable for the request. However, fees and charges may apply and, if they do, will be set in accordance with Part 4 of the FOI Guidelines, which are available from the OAIC and AIMS websites.

Information Publication Scheme

AIMS continues to undertake actions consistent with compliance requirements under the IPS pursuant to the relevant provisions of the FOI Act. The IPS encourages governments and government agencies to provide open, accountable and transparent information in formats that are easy to understand and freely accessible.

Contact

All enquiries and requests for information, or concerning access to documents or any other matters relating to FOI, should be directed to:

FOI Contact Officer, Australian Institute of Marine Science
PMB No. 3, Townsville Mail Centre MC, QLD 4810
Telephone: (07) 4753 4444
Email: FOI@aims.gov.au

Part 4: Our People

Organisational Structure

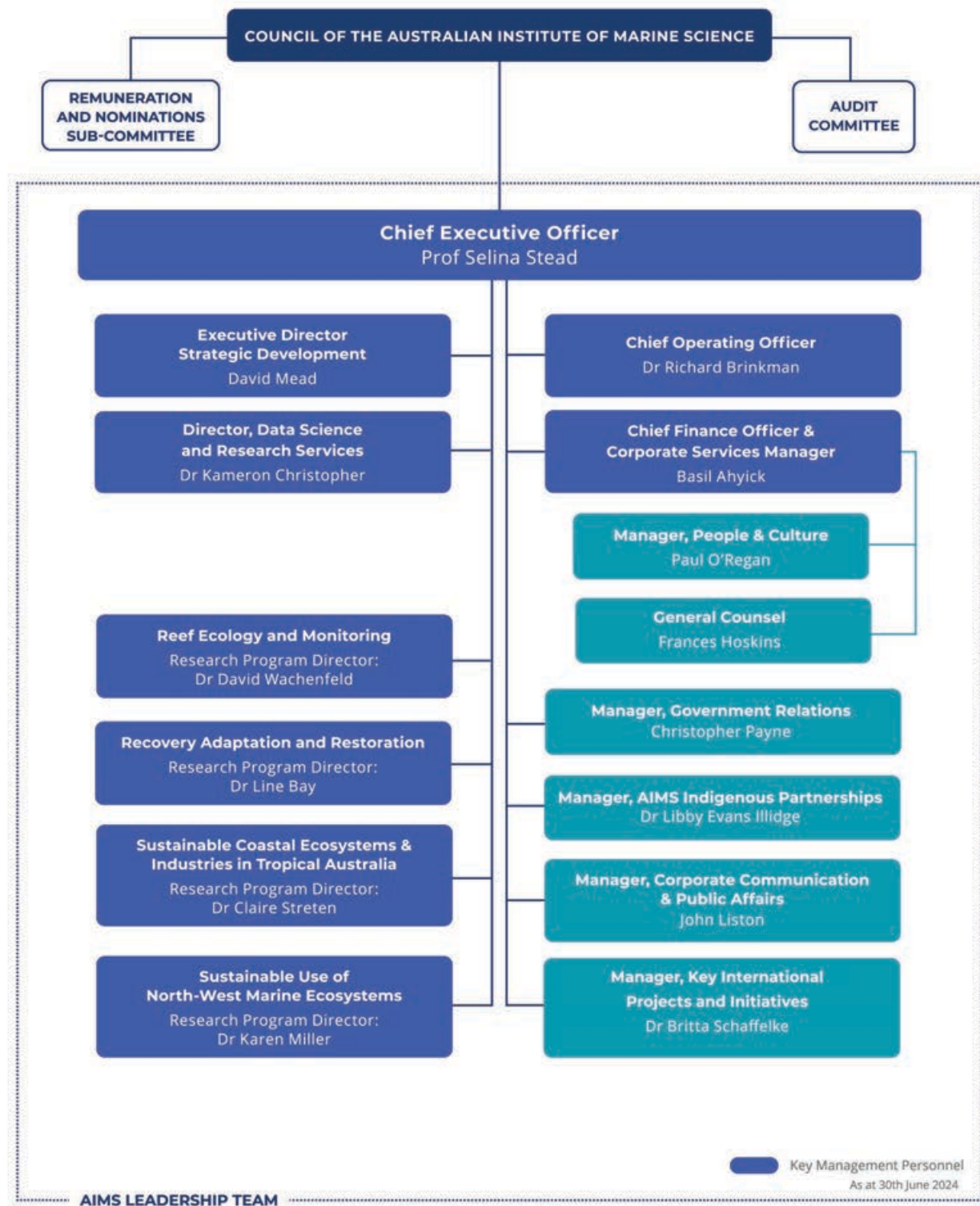


Figure 12: Organisational structure of the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

Staff

AIMS employed an average of 354 full-time equivalent (FTE) science and support staff during FY 2023–24, including 29.21 FTE under labour hire arrangements, 1.78 FTE casuals and 3.99 FTE temporary staff. In addition, AIMS engaged 46 FTE personnel via outsourced functions (see Table 8).

Many of our scientists are world authorities in their field who have achieved international acclaim for their research. The work of the research scientists is supported by a variety of professional and technical support staff skilled in the following:

- research support
- laboratory and analytical services
- data collection and data management
- commercial and business development services
- intellectual property portfolio management
- engineering and field operations services
- science communication
- corporate support functions comprising human resources, financial, information services, supply and general management.

Where appropriate, AIMS contracts services. Currently, contracted services are for catering, cleaning, site maintenance, security and crewing marine research vessels.

AIMS core staff numbers

Table 8: Average Staffing Level Numbers (ASL): Ongoing employees, by gender and location 2023-24

	Location									
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	ACT	NT	External	Overseas
Man/Male Full time		114				26	2	4		
Man/Male Part time		2								
Man/Male Total	0	116	0	0	0	26	2	4	0	0
Woman/Female Full time		71				15	1	4		
Woman/Female Part time		8			1	6				
Woman/Female Total	0	79	0	0	1	21	1	4	0	0
Non-Binary Full time										
Non-Binary Part time										
Non-Binary Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefers not to answer Full time										
Prefers not to answer Part time										
Prefers not to answer Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uses a different term Full time										
Uses a different term Part time										
Uses a different term Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	195	0	0	1	47	3	8	0	0

Table 9: Average Staffing Level Numbers (ASL): Non-ongoing employees, by gender and location 2023-24

	Location									
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	ACT	NT	External	Overseas
Man/Male Full time		40				10		2		
Man/Male Part time		3								
Man/Male Total	0	43	0	0	0	10	0	2	0	0
Woman/Female Full time		59				12				
Woman/Female Part time		7			1	1				
Woman/Female Total	0	66	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0
Non-Binary Full time										
Non-Binary Part time										
Non-Binary Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefers not to answer Full time										
Prefers not to answer Part time										
Prefers not to answer Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uses a different term Full time										
Uses a different term Part time										
Uses a different term Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	109	0	0	1	23	0	2	0	0

Table 10: Average Staffing Level Numbers (ASL): Ongoing employees, by gender and location for previous reporting period (2022-23)

	Location									
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	ACT	NT	External	Overseas
Man/Male Full time		92				22	1	5		
Man/Male Part time		3								
Man/Male Total	0	95	0	0	0	22	1	5	0	0
Woman/Female Full time		65				9	2	2		
Woman/Female Part time		4			1	6				
Woman/Female Total	0	69	0	0	1	15	2	2	0	0
Non-Binary Full time										
Non-Binary Part time										
Non-Binary Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefers not to answer Full time										
Prefers not to answer Part time										
Prefers not to answer Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uses a different term Full time										
Uses a different term Part time										
Uses a different term Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	164	0	0	1	37	3	7	0	0

Table 11: Average Staffing Level Numbers (ASL): Non-ongoing employees, by gender and location for previous reporting period (2022-23)

	Location									
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	ACT	NT	External	Overseas
Man/Male Full time		56				10	1	2		
Man/Male Part time		2								
Man/Male Total	0	58	0	0	0	10	1	2	0	0
Woman/Female Full time		60				14				
Woman/Female Part time		9				3				
Woman/Female Total	0	69	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0
Non-Binary Full time										
Non-Binary Part time										
Non-Binary Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefers not to answer Full time										
Prefers not to answer Part time										
Prefers not to answer Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uses a different term Full time										
Uses a different term Part time										
Uses a different term Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	127	0	0	0	27	1	2	0	0

Staff Consultation

Staff consultation and communication takes place via a range of mediums such as all-staff meetings, emails and newsletters and various electronic platforms. The Joint Consultative Committee—comprising AIMS CEO (chair), a management representative (Chief Operating Officer), the Manager People and Culture, Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) representatives (internal), a CPSU organiser (external), and staff representatives—met five times in 2023–24. This committee provides a forum for discussion and consultation between management and staff representatives on issues that may affect staff conditions and entitlements.

The AIMS Safety Committee is a long-standing forum dedicated to identifying potential hazards, risks, and safety issues in the workplace and developing plans to mitigate or eliminate those risks to ensure safe work practices and workplaces. The committee is comprised of AIMS Chief Operating Officer, the Health and Safety Manager (chair), Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), and operational managers and addresses safety specific matters. The committee met five times in 2023-24.

The Psychologically Safe Network is a forum dedicated to providing input into the establishment and management of a psychologically safe workplace at AIMS. The initiative is jointly managed by AIMS People and Culture and the Health and Safety Manager and attended by a broad range of participants from different programs and roles within the organisation, including the Health and Safety Manager (Chair), People and Culture Manager, Chief Finance Officer and Chief Operating Officer. The Network met four times in 2023-24.

The Change Management Committee is a new forum whose purpose is to oversee and guide the process of planning, implementing and monitoring organisational change. The committee is comprised of AIMS' Change Manager, Research Program Director - Program 2 (Chair), and attended by corporate, operational and science managers and leaders. The Committee met 6 times in 2023-24.

Leadership Development

During 2023–24, AIMS continued with a significant leadership development program affording all staff the opportunity to participate.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Workforce Diversity

Our workforce diversity policy acknowledges differences and adapts work practices to create an inclusive work environment in which diverse skills, perspectives and cultural backgrounds are valued.

The Institute's staffing policies and procedures align with the requirements of the Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987. Designed to ensure that workforce diversity and equality of opportunity are fundamental operating principles for AIMS, they include:

- regularly reviewing employment policies and practices, and providing ongoing instruction for user groups
- promoting AIMS as an equal opportunity employer in all recruitment advertisements placed in online media and on our website
- supporting equity of access and providing amenities for people with disabilities in AIMS' public access facilities such as conference rooms, theatre, library, cafe and display areas
- constructing new facilities that support equity of access
- catering to staff and visitors with a disability, and providing a wheelchair, if required, on public tours of AIMS
- having mechanisms in place to handle complaints and grievances (formal and informal) to address issues and concerns raised by staff and visitors.

Table 12: Staff numbers in equal employment opportunity categories

EEO category	Proportion of total staff (per cent)					
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	2.05	2.18	2.47	5.41	3.38	3.28
Non-English-speaking background	14.67	15.1	16.44	14.44	17.6	16.1
Staff with disability	1.59	1.32	1.84	4.7	2.2	2.1
Women	41.32	39.23	40.92	46.44	44.96	46.5

Inclusiveness and Diversity in the Workplace

Our workforce initiatives support the wider Australia Public Service undertakings on Indigenous employment, diversity and gender equity. AIMS continues to support career improvement for individuals across all gender groups in higher education and research, helping to facilitate a diverse and inclusive workplace and culture.

In 2020-21 we were awarded Athena Swan Bronze Award certification through Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) and AIMS continues to demonstrate a solid foundation for improving gender equity, diversity and an inclusive culture that values all staff. This includes:

- Progressing activities outlined in our action plan that are based on quantitative and qualitative assessments to continue to identify challenges and opportunities;
- Building upon initiatives that are planned or already in place towards greater awareness, understanding, and practices towards gender equity, diversity and inclusion, and to measure our progress and impact; and
- Identifying key learnings and implementing further improvements or initiatives to affect positive change.

A dedicated working group has been structured to progress our action plan initiatives and collaborates across the organisation to continue on our accreditation pathway towards Silver Award certification. This includes dedication to the submission and achievement of five (5) Cygnet awards that demonstrate progress, impact, and outcomes in addressing key identified barriers on our gender equity, diversity, and inclusion improvement journey.

Code of Conduct

AIMS has a Code of Conduct to which the Council, management, staff and visitors are required to adhere. The Code complies with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013. New Council members, staff and visitors are briefed on the Code during induction.

Workplace Behaviour

Management, staff and visitors at AIMS share responsibility for providing and working in an environment free of harassment and other unacceptable forms of behaviour. In accordance with the AIMS Code of Conduct, staff are required to treat others with courtesy, respect, dignity, fairness and equity, and to have concern for their rights, freedoms and individual needs. A high standard of behaviour is expected, and AIMS has a set of principles outlining the way staff are expected to behave towards others.

Workplace harassment contact officers are available throughout AIMS to discuss, in confidence, matters of concern regarding harassment and associated issues raised by a staff member. AIMS received two formal reported cases of harassment in 2023-24.

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle-Blower Policy)

AIMS has a whistle-blower policy designed to facilitate effective notification, assessment and management of the disclosure of serious wrongdoings in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013.

AIMS strongly encourages reporting of serious wrongdoing and will take appropriate and necessary action to uphold the integrity of the Institute and to promote the public interest. To achieve our goals and obligations in this regard, AIMS is committed to creating and maintaining an environment and culture in which the disclosure of serious wrongdoings is fully supported and protected. There were no formal reported public interest disclosure cases in 2023-24.

National Disability Strategy

AIMS is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are given opportunities for independence, access and full participation. AIMS assesses cases individually and endeavours to implement the most appropriate measures to assist people with disabilities.

AIMS' physical resources continue to be upgraded to meet access needs for people with disabilities, which includes building modifications and the construction of new facilities.

Employee Assistance Program

TELUS Health is contracted by AIMS to provide an independent employee assistance program. The program is free to staff, their family members, and students and provides for up to six sessions to assist with issues of:

- relationship and family problems
- maximising performance
- depression, anxiety and stress
- conflict and communication
- children or family member concerns
- grief and bereavement
- elder care issues
- addiction
- work–life balance
- career path issues
- retirement
- work stress.

In addition, a supervisor support hotline is available.

Participants can refer themselves or be encouraged by a colleague, supervisor, human resource staff or workplace health and safety staff to access the program. The use rate during 2023-24 was 18.4 per cent, an increase from 12.1 per cent in the previous year. Analysis reveals that 78 per cent of access was for personal reasons with 22 per cent being for work-related matters.

Health and Safety

Our Approach

The safety of our people, collaborators, contractors, and those who share or visit our workplaces remains paramount. AIMS Strategy 2030 defines AIMS' safety value, to care for ourselves and others in all that we do. AIMS defines measurable targets with which we will track our progress towards our work, health and safety objectives. At the highest level, AIMS is committed to achieving year on year improvements in safety performance.

Early Intervention, Injury Reduction and Management

A proactive approach to preventing and/or mitigating harm (injury/illness) is employed through review, assessment and early reporting processes. These enable early identification and intervention of psychosocial and/or physical hazards and risks to reduce the frequency and/or severity of serious injury/illness, and ensures that supports are available should a work impacting injury and/or illness occur. There were 22 individual workstations, 10 tasks, and 5 areas ergonomically assessed leading to an upgrade to AIMS ergonomic office facilities. Additionally, 40 manual task functional assessments were undertaken to inform workers, and facilitate safe manual handling practices.

Leadership and Cultural Change

Safety is an AIMS value and embedded in the "Way We Work". We continue to strengthen our safety culture, by continuing to develop our risk, reporting and learning cultures, focusing on identifying and controlling psychosocial and physical hazards, encouraging reporting and communicating findings. We work to create accountability and well-defined responsibilities, consult our workers on safety issues and attitudes (physical or psychosocial), and improve workers safety knowledge through relevant training and information. We have commenced a comprehensive review to ensure our safety management system remains fit-for-purpose as we continue to grow as an organisation in number and complexity.

Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Ongoing implementation of the Psychologically Safe Workplace Network and Action Plan continued in accordance with the APS Mental Health Capability Framework; including the provision of information, training, confidential psychological incident (PI) reporting, and access to support.

A key undertaking has been implementation of the People at Work survey, to identify psychosocial hazards and health outcomes, and understand overall results. With respect to the balance of job resources and demands, AIMS fell into the minimal concern category and benchmarked well against other organisations (Refer to Figure 13). AIMS continues to work consultatively with workers in the management of psychosocial hazards; to identify and manage risk, break down stigma, and promote early intervention in line with the Preventing Bullying, Harassment and Other Hazardous Behaviours Procedure.

AIMS provides access to corporate health and fitness programs, including access to Fitness Passport, an on-site gym at our Townsville site, and other external facilities to improve fitness and overall wellbeing.



Figure 13: Psychologically Safe Workplace framework model

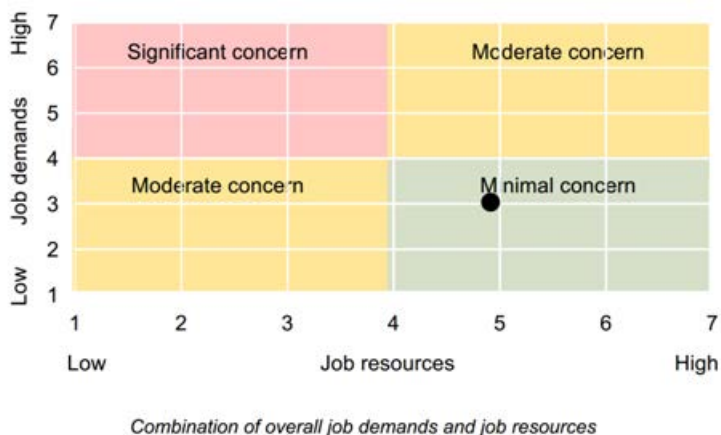


Figure 14: Overall Results, People at Work Comprehensive Report (30 October 2023)

Internal Audit and Inspection Regimes

AIMS provides safe workplaces and practices through physical site inspection schedules, desktop audit review of procedural application led by the AIMS Health and Safety team, and Internal Audit Committee review of policies and procedures. Of the 48 hazard inspections undertaken, 245 corrective actions were identified, with hazardous chemical management a key area of focus.

Risk Management

We are developing robust risk management practice through training delivery, internal governance reviews in key operational areas, risk assessment reviews, and area risk register development and review in line with AIMS Operational Risk Management Procedure and Framework. An online package has been implemented, providing improved flexibility for AIMS workers in accessing this essential training.

Safety Pillars

Our health and safety approach is based on six pillars (Figure 15) that guide our annual strategic work planning:



Figure 15: Health and Safety pillars

Dedicated Safety Roles

Our commitment to the health and safety of workers is demonstrated by the number and diversity of roles dedicated to health and safety management at AIMS:

- HSE Team Members
- Emergency Wardens
- First Aid Officers
- Safety Committee Members
- Health & Safety Representatives
- Harassment Contact Officers
- Cruise Leaders
- Dive Officer & Supervisors
- Dive Safety Working Group
- Boating Officer & Attendants
- Laboratory Managers
- Quarantine & Biosafety Officer
- Radiation Safety Officer
- Emergency Management Officer
- Emergency Management Team
- Business Continuity Team
- Psychologically Safe Network Participants

Lost Time Injuries

There was one lost time injury recorded in 2023-24. AIMS has consistently achieved low lost time injury rates over the past five years, averaging one per annum.

Lead and Lag Indicators

Once again, the year was characterised by rapid organisational growth, with an 11% increase in employee numbers.

AIMS' reporting and risk culture has remained strong, with the total numbers of hazards reported³ accounting for 85% of all reports entered. Of the 151 incidents, near misses and hazards reported in 2023-24, 3 resulted in restricted work, 7 in medical treatment, and 20 minor first aid (Table 13). In addition, AIMS recorded 7 psychosocial incidents and 22 work-impacting COVID incidents, indicating that we must remain vigilant for ongoing impacts to our operations.

Year on year improvement has once more been achieved through AIMS Injury Severity Rate, which improved on the previous year, and was below target. Improvement has not been achieved with respect to the total recordable injury frequency rate (TRIFR), which concluded 3 points above the previous year, and above target. The frequency of recordable⁴ injuries has risen, while their severity and impact has continued to decrease.

There were no notifiable incidents. One new workers' compensation claim was accepted under the Comcare workers' compensation scheme, associated with manual task work, associated with an aggravation of a pre-existing condition.

Table 13: AIMS Safety Reports, 2023-24:

Notifiable Incidents: 0	Hazards: 78
Workers Compensation Claims: 1	Corrective Actions from Hazard Inspections: 245
Lost Time Injuries: 1	Incident Reports: 151

³ Hazards reports + corrective actions from Hazard Inspections = Total Hazards

⁴ MTC + RWC + LTI = Recordable Injuries

Environmental Performance

We have delivered against our commitments to protecting the environment and conserving biodiversity during the year. In particular, we worked with multiple industries, government, the community and other scientific institutions and agencies on programs and projects dedicated to conserving and sustainably managing tropical marine resources. As a community leader and a Commonwealth statutory authority, we have both a moral obligation and a statutory obligation under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 to protect and maintain the biodiversity and heritage under our control. Accordingly, we carefully guard against any avoidable adverse impacts on the environment arising from our own activities and work proactively to minimise the environmental footprint of our operations.

Reducing Our Environmental Impacts

In 2023-24 AIMS continued to make progress towards its strategic target of a 25 per cent reduction in our own carbon emissions. The overall reduction in total carbon emissions compared with the base year of 2017-18 was 28 per cent (for Scope 1 and 2 emissions). AIMS on-site PV solar systems and procurement of electricity from renewable energy sources continue to be the most significant contributions to our emissions reduction, with smaller contributions from transition to a hybrid commuter car fleet. Through our various PV solar arrays, we avoided 1088 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

This year we have achieved a reduction in solid waste to landfill of 43 tonnes compared with 2018-19. This represents a 28 per cent reduction from the 2018-19 base year. In 2023-24 we recycled 33.93 tonnes of paper, cardboard and plastic products. This is a 60 per cent increase on the previous year.

Table 14: AIMS APSNetZero 2023-24 Emissions Reporting Summary

2023-24 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY - LOCATION-BASED METHOD				
Emission Source	Scope 1 tCO ₂ -e	Scope 2 tCO ₂ -e	Scope 3 tCO ₂ -e	Total tCO ₂ -e
Electricity (Location Based Approach)	N/A	4,761.486	958.611	5,720.097
Natural Gas	135.979	N/A	20.847	156.826
Solid Waste*	N/A	N/A	182.208	182.208
Refrigerants**†	0.000	N/A	N/A	0.000
Fleet and Other Vehicles	1,607.428	N/A	396.632	2,004.060
Domestic Commercial Flights	N/A	N/A	698.343	698.343
Domestic Hire Car*	N/A	N/A	0.000	0.000
Domestic Travel Accommodation*	N/A	N/A	35.135	35.135
Other Energy	75.059	N/A	18.498	93.557
Total tCO₂-e	1,818.466	4,761.486	2,310.274	8,890.226

Note: the table above presents emissions related to electricity usage using the location-based accounting method. CO₂-e = Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.
 * indicates emission sources collected for the first time in 2023-24. The quality of data is expected to improve over time as emissions reporting matures.
 † indicates optional emission source for 2023-24 emissions reporting.

2023-24 ELECTRICITY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS				
Emission Source	Scope 1 tCO ₂ -e	Scope 3 tCO ₂ -e	Total tCO ₂ -e	Percentage of electricity use
Electricity (Location Based Approach)	4,761.486	958.611	5,720.097	100%
Market-based electricity emissions	3,383.743	417.746	3,801.489	63.08%
Total renewable electricity	-	-	-	36.92%
Mandatory renewables ¹	-	-	-	18.72%
Voluntary renewables ²	-	-	-	18.20%

Note: the table above presents emissions related to electricity usage using both the location-based and the market-based accounting methods. CO₂-e = Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.
¹ Mandatory renewables are the portion of electricity consumed from the grid that is generated by renewable sources. This includes the renewable power percentage.
² Voluntary renewables reflect the eligible carbon credit units surrendered by the entity. This may include purchased large-scale generation certificates, power purchasing agreements, GreenPower and the jurisdictional renewable power percentage (ACT only).

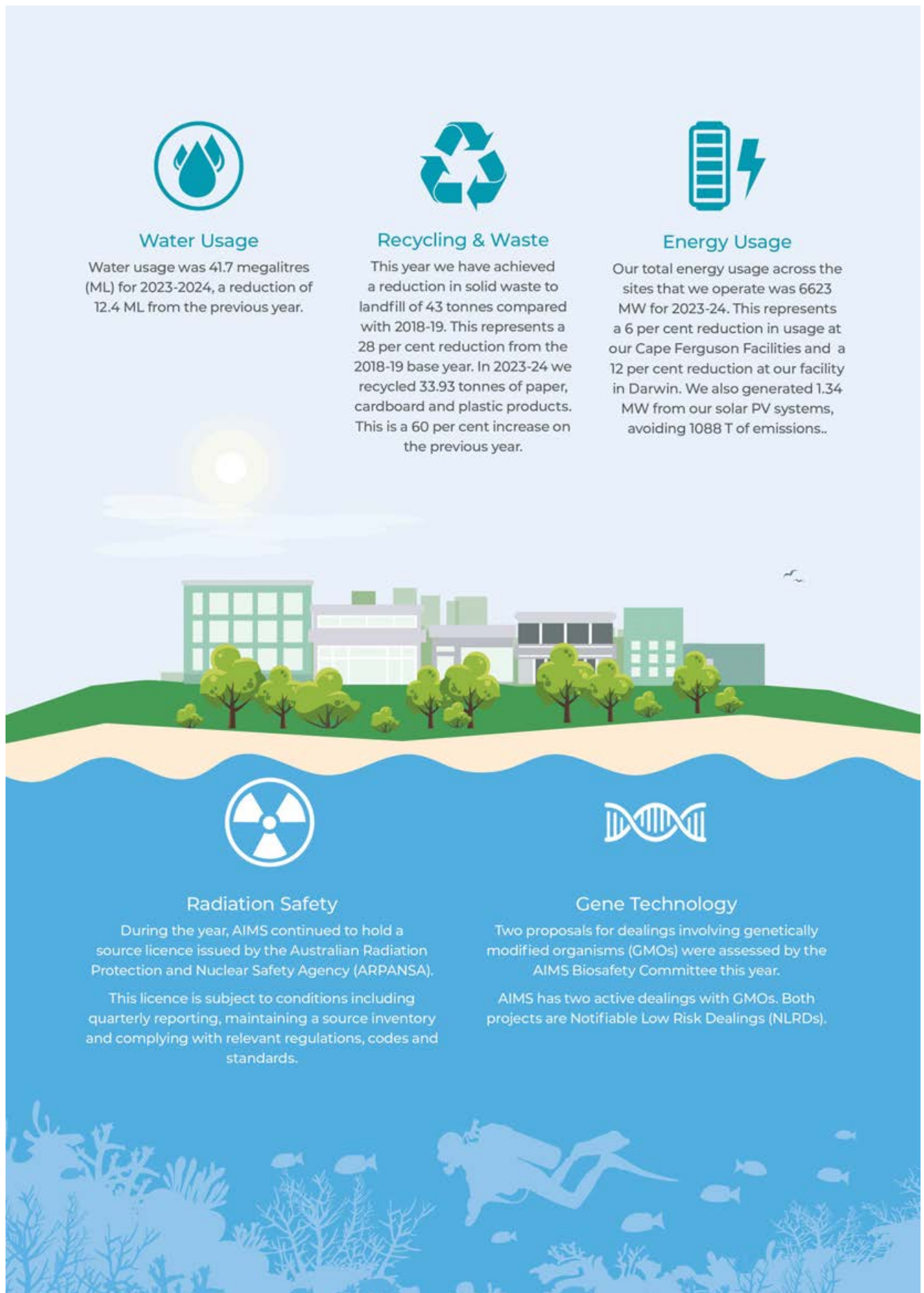


Figure 16: Environmental performance

Our alignment to ecologically sustainable development

Table 15: Alignment and contribution to ESD principles

Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) Principle	Our Alignment and Contribution
Decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations.	All AIMS work is assessed with ESD impact in mind. Projects are selected based on their environmental, economic, and social net value to the organisation, community and country in line with the AIMS Strategy 2030.
If there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.	<p>AIMS complies with all major environmental laws and requirements in its operations and capital works.</p> <p>Environmental protection is mandated when planning and undertaking major capital works. Any proposed activities that may fall under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 are assessed for referral to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. Proposals for new or modifications to existing facilities undergo rigorous internal safety, regulatory and environmental processes with independent oversight.</p> <p>A continuous improvement program is in place to reduce environmental impact through reducing energy and water consumption and waste generated.</p> <p>AIMS conducts large scale environmental monitoring programs and risk-based modelling to provide impartial advice on management and policy for government and industry decision makers. The organisation is leading the Australian research effort to identify innovative ways to assist coral reefs to recover from the impact of existing environmental conditions.</p>
The principle of inter-generational equity – that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.	<p>AIMS’ Project Management Framework includes evaluations of future impact (targeting net social, economic and environmental benefits) for Australia. The organisation leads the global research effort to assist coral reefs in adapting to future environmental conditions to ensure the benefits of coral reefs are sustained for generations of Australians to come.</p> <p>AIMS actively integrates environmental responsibility and sustainability into our operations, minimising our environmental footprint through building infrastructure and behaviour change, and preventing, minimising and controlling pollution. Reducing our consumption of energy, water and resources not only supports sustainable objectives, it also contributes to our financial sustainability and allows us to redirect more funds into our science.</p>
The conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making.	AIMS provides monitoring, modelling and research ensuring that the impact of policy and decisions on biological diversity and ecological integrity are understood by tropical marine managers. AIMS works with managers and decision makers to deliver sustainability.
Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.	AIMS has no activities in this area.

Part 5: Financial Statements

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for the Environment and Water

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (the Entity) for the year ended 30 June 2024:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*;
- (b) comply with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*; and
- (c) present fairly the financial position of the Entity as at 30 June 2024 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

The financial statements of the Entity, which I have audited, comprise the following as at 30 June 2024 and for the year then ended:

- Statement by the Accountable Authority, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes to the financial statements, comprising material accounting policy information and other explanatory information.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Entity in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements for financial statement audits conducted by the Auditor-General and their delegates. These include the relevant independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) to the extent that they are not in conflict with the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I confirm that the independence declaration required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, which has been given to the Council, would be in the same terms if given to the Council as at the time of this auditor's report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Accountable Authority's responsibility for the financial statements

As the Accountable Authority of the Entity, the Council is responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act) for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the rules made under the Act. The Council is also responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the Council determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

GPO Box 707, Canberra ACT 2601
38 Sydney Avenue, Forrest ACT 2603
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In preparing the financial statements, the Council is responsible for assessing the ability of the Entity to continue as a going concern, taking into account whether the Entity's operations will cease as a result of an administrative restructure or for any other reason. The Council is also responsible for disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting, unless the assessment indicates that it is not appropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control;
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Accountable Authority;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Accountable Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern; and
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Accountable Authority regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Australian National Audit Office



Bradley Medina
Senior Executive Director
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra
27 August 2024

Australian Institute of Marine Science

STATEMENT BY THE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act and the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Australian Institute of Marine Science will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Council and signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulations 2022*.

Signed

Signed

Signed





Dr Elizabeth Woods
Chairman
On behalf of the Accountable Authority
 27 August 2024

Prof Selina Stead
Chief Executive Officer
 27 August 2024

Ms Justine Bolton
Acting Chief Finance Officer
 27 August 2024

Statement of Comprehensive Income
for the period ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES				
Expenses				
Employee Benefits	1.1A	54,019	43,924	61,652
Suppliers	1.1B	67,158	42,839	67,195
Depreciation and amortisation	2.2	13,649	13,825	16,521
Finance costs		20	20	16
Write-down and impairment of assets		2,035	-	-
Foreign exchange losses		27	15	-
Losses from asset disposal		154	-	100
Total Expenses		137,062	100,623	145,484
Own-source Income				
Own-source revenue				
Revenue from contracts with customers	1.2A	32,094	36,767	35,345
National Sea Simulator construction and operations funding		22,951	11,485	20,932
Interest		8,981	3,347	1,650
Other revenue		986	944	400
Total own-source revenue		65,012	52,543	58,327
Gains				
Gains from sale of assets		260	73	100
Total gains		260	73	100
Total own-source income		65,272	52,616	58,427
Net cost of services				
Revenue from Government		99,852	62,926	99,852
Total Revenue from Government		99,852	62,926	99,852
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Australian Government		28,062	14,919	12,795
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				
Items not subject to subsequent reclassification to net cost of services				
Changes in asset revaluation reserve		(2,087)	6,192	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to the Australian Government		25,975	21,111	12,795

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
ASSETS				
Financial Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	2.1A	22,417	33,009	250
Trade and other receivables	2.1B	13,424	13,109	11,629
Other investments	2.1C	114,000	60,000	50,098
Total financial assets		149,841	106,118	61,977
Non-Financial Assets				
Buildings ¹	2.2	119,336	111,912	161,109
Infrastructure, plant & equipment	2.2	54,256	46,286	47,799
Computer software	2.2	730	1,036	2,132
Prepayments		2,925	2,956	3,256
Inventory		373	254	504
Total non-financial assets		177,620	162,444	214,800
Total assets		327,460	268,562	276,777
LIABILITIES				
Payables				
Suppliers	2.3A	7,913	2,889	3,786
Salaries and wages		1,646	1,223	
Other payables	2.3B	28,745	33,078	11,837
Total payables		38,304	37,190	15,623
Interest bearing liabilities				
Leases	2.3B	763	857	704
Total interest bearing liabilities		763	857	704
Provisions				
Employee provisions	3.1	16,262	13,605	15,904
Other provisions		17	17	-
Total provisions		16,279	13,622	15,904
Total liabilities		55,346	51,669	32,231
Net assets		272,114	216,893	244,546
EQUITY				
Contributed equity		135,153	105,907	135,153
Reserves		116,680	118,767	112,575
Retained earnings		20,281	(7,781)	(3,182)
Total equity		272,114	216,893	244,546

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

1. Right-of-use assets are included in the non-financial assets buildings line item.

Statement of Changes in Equity
for the period ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
CONTRIBUTED EQUITY			
Opening balance as at 1 July			
Balance carried forward from previous period	105,907	88,357	105,907
Transactions with owners			
Contributions by owners			
Equity injection	29,246	17,550	29,246
Total transactions with owners	29,246	17,550	29,246
Closing balance as at 30 June	135,153	105,907	135,153
RETAINED EARNINGS			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	(7,781)	(22,702)	(15,977)
Comprehensive income			
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period	28,062	14,919	12,795
Other comprehensive income	-	2	-
Total comprehensive income	28,062	14,921	12,795
Closing balance as at 30 June	20,281	(7,781)	(3,182)
ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	118,767	112,575	112,575
Comprehensive income			
Other comprehensive income	(2,087)	6,192	-
Total comprehensive income	(2,087)	6,192	-
Closing balance as at 30 June	116,680	118,767	112,575
TOTAL EQUITY			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	216,893	178,230	202,505
Comprehensive income			
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period	28,062	14,919	12,795
Total comprehensive income	28,062	14,921	12,795
Asset revaluation reserve			
Other comprehensive income	(2,087)	6,192	-
Total asset revaluation reserve	(2,087)	6,192	-
Transactions with owners			
Contributions by owners			
Equity injection	29,246	17,550	29,246
Total transactions with owners	29,246	17,550	29,246
Closing balance as at 30 June	272,114	216,893	244,546

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Accounting Policy

Equity injections

Amounts appropriated which are designated as 'equity injections' for a year (less any formal reductions).

Cash Flow Statement

for the period ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Cash received				
Receipts from Government		99,852	62,926	99,852
Sale of goods and rendering of services		23,300	31,063	35,360
National Sea Simulator construction and operational expenses funding		18,543	8,646	-
Interest		8,437	1,898	1,746
GST received		9,287	5,402	-
Other		958	984	400
Total cash received		160,377	110,919	137,358
Cash used				
Employees		50,336	41,599	59,711
Suppliers		61,193	38,639	66,123
Interest payments on lease liabilities		20	20	16
GST paid		3,854	3,442	-
Other		-	26	-
Total cash used		115,403	83,726	125,850
Net cash from/(used by) operating activities		44,974	27,193	11,508
INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Cash received				
Proceeds from sales of property, plant & equipment		260	232	119
Total cash received		260	232	119
Cash used				
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		30,977	17,707	64,324
Purchase of investments		54,000	40,000	-
Total cash used		84,977	57,707	64,324
Net cash from/(used by) investing activities		(84,718)	(57,475)	(64,205)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES				
Cash received				
Contributed equity		29,246	17,550	29,246
Total cash received		29,246	17,550	29,246
Cash used				
Principal payments of lease liabilities		94	131	59
Total cash used		94	131	59
Net Cash from/(used by) Financing activities		29,152	17,419	29,187
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		(10,592)	(12,863)	(23,510)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		33,009	45,872	73,858
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	2.1A	22,417	33,009	50,348

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Budgetary Reporting of Major Variances (AASB1055)

The Budget variances reporting commentary provides a comparison between the 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) provided to Parliament in March 2023 and the final outcome in the 2023-24 financial statements. The PBS is not audited. Major changes in budget have been explained as part of the variance analysis where relevant. Variances are considered to be 'major' where:

- (a) the variance between budget and actual is greater than +/- 10% of the budget for the line items; and
 (b) the variance between budget and actual is greater than +/- 2% of the relevant budget base.

Variance explanations will also be provided where there have been major changes to business activities that may not be numerically material but by nature may assist users in understanding underlying business changes that may have occurred since the original budget was released.

Explanations of major variances	Affected line items/statements
Statement of Comprehensive Income	
Expenses	
Employee expenses were \$7.633m lower than budget due to labour market constraints impacting the time to recruit vacant and new positions. Additional work undertaken for unplanned bleaching activities was offset by decreased Supplier - external tasks due to milestone movements to accommodate the additional work.	Employee benefits
Depreciation and amortisation were \$2.872m lower than budget due to the timing associated with commissioning major projects.	Depreciation and amortisation
Previously capitalised work-in-progress for the wharf remediation (\$0.609m) and the new vessel design concept (\$1.427m) were written back as expenditure as it is not probable that future economic benefits associated with the items will flow to the entity.	Write-down and impairment of assets
AIMS disposed of a number of vehicles and scientific equipment this financial year, this amount is offset by proceeds from the sale of assets in gains.	Losses from asset disposal
Revenue	
Revenue from contracts with customers was \$3.251m lower than budget due to milestone movements to accommodate additional work undertaken for unplanned bleaching activities.	Revenue from contracts with customers
The higher than budgeted amount of \$2.019m National Sea Simulator construction and operations funding reflects actual construction and operational costs incurred in the year which was classified as other revenue in the budget.	National Sea Simulator construction and operations funding
Interest income was \$7.331m higher than budget due to \$86.069m higher than budgeted cash and investment balances.	Interest
Statement of Financial Position	
Total Financial Assets were \$87.864m higher than budgeted and Total Non-Financial Assets were \$37.181m lower than budgeted as a result of the timing associated with constructions works. The National Sea Simulator building expansion has not been commissioned while the equity contributions received for the AIMS wharf remediation and new vessel design concept remain unspent as the work in progress to date have been recorded as expenditure as it is not probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the entity.	Total Financial Assets Total Non-Financial Assets
Other Payables were \$16.908m higher than budget largely due to the ongoing National Sea Simulator construction and the associated deferred revenue not recognised due to the delay in commissioning the building.	Other Payables
Statement of Changes in Equity	
Retained earnings performed favourably. The actual surplus of \$28.062m was \$15.267m higher than budgeted largely due to higher than budgeted interest received and lower employee and depreciation expenses.	Surplus
Cashflow Statement	
The budget assumed cash and cash equivalents to be \$73.858m at the beginning of the year. The actual balance at the beginning of the year was \$33.009m, as a result of lower than budget operating payments and purchase of property, plant and equipment that were offset by the purchase of investments.	Operating receipts

Overview

Objectives of the Australian Institute of Marine Science

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) is a Corporate Commonwealth entity established by the *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972*. It is a not-for-profit entity. AIMS registered office address is included at the front of the Annual Report.

The mission of AIMS is to provide the research and knowledge of Australia's tropical marine estate required to support growth in its sustainable use, effective environmental management and protection of its unique ecosystems.

The continued existence of AIMS in its present form and with its present programs is dependent on Government policy and on continuing funding by Parliament for AIMS administration and science research programs.

The Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The financial statements and notes have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015* (FRR);
- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations - including simplified disclosures for Tier 2 Entities under AASB 1060 issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period; and
- c) The financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

Significant Accounting Judgements and Estimates

In the process of applying the accounting policies listed in this note, AIMS has made the following judgements that have the most significant impact on the amounts recorded in the financial statements.

- Recognition of revenue for rendering of services – Refer Note 1.2: Own-Source Revenue and Gains
- Fair value of buildings, plant and equipment – Refer Note 2.2: Non-Financial Assets
- Remaining useful lives of buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment - Refer Note 2.2: Non-Financial Assets
- Employee entitlement provision – Refer Note 3.1: Employee Provisions

No accounting assumptions or estimates have been identified that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

New Australian Accounting Standards

All new/revised standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period, did not have a material effect to AIMS' financial statements.

Taxation

AIMS is exempt from all forms of taxation except Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities are recognised net of GST, except:

- a) where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- b) for receivables and payables.

Insurance

AIMS is insured through the Federal Government self-insured managed insurance fund Comcover. Workers compensation is insured through Comcare.

Events After the Reporting Period

There was no subsequent event that had the potential to significantly affect the ongoing structure and financial activities of AIMS.

Financial Performance

This section analyses the financial performance of Australian Institute of Marine Science for the year ended 2024

1.1: Expenses

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
1.1A: Employee Benefits		
Wages and salaries	40,190	33,115
Superannuation		
Defined contribution plans	5,270	4,089
Defined benefit plans	1,214	1,271
Leave and other entitlements	6,853	5,032
Separation and redundancies	-	-
Fringe Benefit Tax	492	417
Total employee benefits	54,019	43,924

Accounting Policy

Accounting policies for employee related expenses are contained in the People and relationships section.

1.1B: Suppliers

Goods and services supplied or rendered

ANAO Audit fees	56	52
Assistance to external providers	472	363
Communication expenses	754	737
Consultants	7,230	4,440
Consumables	2,706	1,894
Contractors	17,115	2,740
Corporate memberships and subscription	117	84
Electricity	1,466	1,490
Employee related expenses	1,162	1,173
Fuel, oil and gas	1,167	1,226
General expenses	1,186	1,397
Hire of equipment	3,576	2,660
IT expenses	2,717	1,861
Labour Hire staff	3,596	3,084
Legal and instrument registration expenses	315	114
Library expenses	57	110
Meeting expenses	466	307
Property expenses	2,156	1,818
Repairs and maintenance	7,146	6,059
Science expenses	631	432
Support for post-doctorate positions	4,511	3,633
Travel	3,715	2,538
Vessel management	4,777	4,558
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	67,094	42,770

Goods supplied	10,020	7,963
Services rendered	57,074	34,807
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	67,094	42,770

Other Suppliers

Workers compensation expenses	64	69
Total other suppliers	64	69
Total suppliers	67,158	42,839

Accounting Policy

Short-term leases and lease of low-value assets

AIMS has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of assets that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (less than \$10,000). AIMS recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over lease term, these expenses are included in Hire of equipment.

Finance costs

All borrowing costs are expensed as incurred.

1.2 Own-Source Revenue and Gains

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Own-Source Revenue		
1.2A Revenue from contracts with customers		
Rendering of services	32,094	30,612
Total revenue from contracts with customers	32,094	30,612
Disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers		
Major product/service line:		
Research services	32,094	30,612
	32,094	30,612
Type of customer:		
Australian Government entities (related parties)	9,819	7,189
Industry	9,295	8,045
International Government	1,008	227
International Industry	43	30
International Philanthropic	702	920
Philanthropy	9,806	17,669
State and Territory Governments	1,421	2,687
	32,094	36,767
Timing of transfer of goods and services:		
Over time	25,779	22,845
Point in time	6,315	13,922
	32,094	36,767

Accounting Policy - AASB 15 & AASB 1058

AIMS contracts comprise of a number of performance obligations pertaining to research services. Under AASB, AIMS needs to first determine whether such a contract is in scope of AASB 15 or AASB 1058, that is whether the transaction is a contract with a customer (AASB 15) or a genuine donation or volunteer service (AASB 1058) or construction of an asset (AASB 1058).

The standard (AASB 15.9) specifies criteria which must be met for each contract to be in the scope of AASB 15. These are:

- The parties have approved the contract;
- AIMS can identify each party's rights regarding the goods or services to be transferred;
- AIMS can identify the payment terms for the transferred goods;
- The contract has commercial substance; and
- It is probable that AIMS will collect the consideration to which it is entitled.

Notwithstanding paragraph 15.9, in respect of not-for-profits, if a contract that would otherwise be within the scope of AASB 15 does not meet the criteria in paragraph 9 noted above, as it is unenforceable or not sufficiently specific, it is not a contract with a customer within the scope of AASB 15. AIMS shall consider the requirements of AASB 1058 in accounting for such contracts.

Additional considerations from the standard also contemplate cancellability of arrangements, and states a contract does not exist if each party to the contract has the unilateral enforceable right to terminate a wholly unperformed contract without compensating the other party.

A contract is wholly unperformed if both of the following criteria are met (AASB 15.12):

- AIMS has not yet transferred any promised goods or services to the customer; and
- AIMS has not yet received, and is not yet entitled to receive, any consideration in exchange for the promised goods or services.

If a contract does not meet the criteria above, AIMS shall continue to reassess the contract until the criteria are met. Once the criteria have been met, no subsequent reassessment is needed unless there is a significant change in circumstances (AASB 15.13 and 15.14).

AIMS recognises contract liabilities for consideration received in respect of performance obligations paid for up-front and reports these amounts as contractual liabilities in the statement of financial position. Similarly, if AIMS satisfies a performance obligation before it receives the consideration, AIMS recognises either a contractual asset or a receivable in its statement of financial position, depending on whether something other than the passage of time is required before the consideration is due.

The transaction price is the total amount of consideration to which AIMS expects to be entitled in exchange for transferring promised goods or services to a customer. The consideration promised in a contract with a customer may include fixed amounts, variable amounts, or both.

AIMS recognises a construction liability for income received in respect of its obligations under construction grant agreement. AIMS will satisfy its obligations over-time during construction process (AASB 1058). The operations component of the grant agreement will recognise revenue, similar to contracts with customers, according to annual agreed activities (AASB 15) of the grant agreement otherwise refunds may be processed.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30 day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed at end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

National Sea Simulator construction and operational expenses funding

AIMS recognises a construction liability for income received in respect of its obligations under construction grant agreement. AIMS will satisfy its obligations over-time during construction process (AASB 1058). The operations component of the grant agreement will recognise revenue, similar to contracts with customers, according to annual agreed activities (AASB 15) of the grant agreement otherwise refunds may be processed.

Interest

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method.

Revenue from Government

Funding received or receivable from agencies (appropriated to AIMS as a corporate body payment item) is recognised as revenue from Government when the entity gains control of the funding unless the funding is in the nature of an equity injection or loan.

Accounting Judgement and Estimates

Revenue recognition for contractual revenue with customers has significant judgements. The determination of the revenue recognition is on contractual term, distinction of research services over time or time and materials at a point in time, transaction price, satisfaction of control has passed to a client, identification of costs that can be capitalised and any material variations to contracts.

Financial Position

This section analyses the Australian Institute of Marine Science assets used to conduct its operations and the operating liabilities incurred as a result. Employee related information is disclosed in the People and Relationships section.

2.1 Financial Assets

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
2.1A: Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash on hand	4	4
Cash on deposit	22,413	33,005
Total cash and cash equivalents	22,417	33,009

Accounting Policy

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents includes:

- a) Cash on hand; and
- b) Demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

2.1B: Trade and other receivables

Goods and services receivables

Contract assets from contracts with customers	6,361	7,382
Goods and services	3,994	3,732
Total Goods and services receivables	10,355	11,114

Other receivables

GST receivable from the Australian Taxation Office (net)	975	444
Interest	2,094	1,551
Total services receivables	3,069	1,995

Total trade and other receivables (gross)

13,424	13,109
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The contract assets from contracts with customers are associated with research services.

Credit terms for goods and services were within 30 days (2023: 30 days).

Accounting Policy

Financial Assets

Trade receivables and other receivables that are held for the purpose of collecting the contractual cash flows where the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest, that are not provided at below-market interest rates, are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method adjusted for an loss allowance.

2.1C: Investments

Deposits	114,000	60,000
Total investments	114,000	60,000

Accounting Policy

Investments

Investments are placed with Council authorised Australian banks who provide the highest quoted interest rate, ensuring the maximum amount invested with an individual bank does not exceed 75% of total AIMS' relevant monies.

2.2 Non-Financial Assets

2.2: Reconciliation of the Opening and Closing Balances of Property, Plant and Equipment and Computer Software

	Buildings \$'000	Infrastructure Plant & Equipment \$'000	Computer Equipment \$'000	Computer Software \$'000	Vehicles \$'000	Office Equipment \$'000	Ships, Launches & Vessels \$'000	Total \$'000
As at 1 July 2023								
Gross book value	112,249	32,823	4,031	8,598	2,693	76	23,765	184,145
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(337)	(10,171)	(1,604)	(7,562)	(1,458)	(33)	(3,745)	(24,911)
Net book value 1 July 2023	111,912	22,652	2,427	1,036	1,145	43	20,019	159,234
Additions								
Purchase or internally developed	1,919	182	-	-	-	-	-	2,100
Work in progress additions	49	4,272	915	27	876	49	92	6,289
Work in progress transferred to capital	19,386	4,179	0	(3)	(19)	-	849	24,392
Right-of-use assets	67	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
Work in progress write-down and impairment of assets ¹	(609)	-	-	-	-	-	(1,426)	(2,035)
Renovations and impairments recognised in other comprehensive income	(7,736)	778	158	-	1,544	4	3,068	(2,087)
Renovations recognised in net cost of services	101	35	3	1	14	-	-	154
Depreciation and amortisation	(5,472)	(4,236)	(923)	(30)	(735)	(20)	(1,695)	(13,471)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	(178)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(178)
Disposals Cost	(105)	(152)	(51)	(5)	(246)	(0)	-	(557)
Disposals Depreciation	4	126	50	4	240	-	-	423
Total as at 30 June 2024	119,336	27,835	2,579	730	2,859	76	20,907	174,322
Total as at 30 June 2024 represented by								
Gross book value	119,377	28,037	2,576	8,617	2,837	76	21,224	183,144
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(442)	(202)	4	(7,887)	22	0	(318)	(8,822)
Total as at 30 June 2024	119,336	27,835	2,579	730	2,859	76	20,907	174,322
Carrying amount of right-of-use assets	694	-	-	-	-	-	-	694
Depreciation rates are based on the following useful lives:	5-72 years	2-42 years	4-23 years	2-10 years	4-12 years	5-30 years	3-25 years	

1. Work in progress write-down is made up of Wharf Remediation (\$0.509m) and New Vessel Design Concept (\$1.427m) capital that was written-back as expenditure as it is not probable that future economic benefits will flow to the Institute.
2. Right-of-use assets associated with the leases of buildings have been classified as buildings.
3. No property, plant and equipment and intangibles are expected to be sold or disposed of within the next 12 months.
4. In 2024 the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment included \$41,899m (2023: \$17,967m) relating to expenditure incurred in the course of construction.

Contractual commitments for the acquisition of property, plant, equipment and intangible assets

As at 30 June 2024, AIMS had contractual commitments for the construction of assets of \$5,303m (2023: \$21,944m).

Revaluations of non-financial assets

In the current year a comprehensive valuation was completed by Pricles Valuation Services (PVS). For assets classified as having Level 2 inputs, AIMS reviewed the market data and replacement costs against similar assets in the most appropriate active market. This enabled AIMS to ascertain that the fair value was materially in line with observable market data. For assets classified as having Level 3 inputs, these assets were valued using the cost approach which is replacement cost less physical deterioration, less functional (design/materials) and economic obsolescence to determine fair value. All increments and decrements are transferred to the asset revaluation surplus by asset class and included in the equity section of the statement of financial position. Any disposals of revalued assets, the revaluation amount is transferred to the retained surplus/deficit account. \$2,087m was recognised as a decrement (2023: \$6,192m increment).

2.2 Non-Financial Assets (cont)

Accounting Policy

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value plus transaction costs where appropriate.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transferor's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchases of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases costing less than \$2,000, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total such as IT equipment).

Lease Right of Use (ROU) Assets

Lease ROU assets are capitalised at the commencement date of the lease and comprise of the initial lease liability amount, initial direct costs incurred when entering into the lease less any lease incentives received. These assets are accounted for by Commonwealth lessees as separate asset classes to corresponding assets owned outright, but included in the same column as where the corresponding underlying assets would be presented if they were owned.

On initial adoption of AASB 16 AIMS has adjusted the ROU assets at the date of initial application by the amount of any provision for onerous leases recognised immediately before the date of initial application. Following initial application, an impairment review is undertaken for any right of use lease asset that shows indicators of impairment and an impairment loss is recognised against any right of use lease asset that is impaired. Lease ROU assets continue to be measured at cost after initial recognition in Commonwealth agency, GGS and Whole of Government financial statements.

Revaluations

Following initial recognition at cost, property plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets) are carried at fair value less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets do not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment was credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation surplus except to the extent that it reversed a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets were recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that they reverse a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

Depreciation

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the AIMS using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation. Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

The depreciation rates for ROU assets are based on the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the ROU asset or the end of the lease term.

Impairment

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2024. Where indications of impairment exist, the asset's recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment made if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs to sell and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if AIMS were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

Derecognition

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

2.2 Non-Financial Assets (cont)

Computer software

These assets are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Computer software costing less than \$2,000 is expensed in the year of acquisition. Computer software is amortised on a straight-line basis over its anticipated useful life and SaaS assets over the contractual term of the agreement. All software assets were assessed for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2024.

Accounting Judgements and Estimates

The fair value of property, plant and equipment is assessed at market value or current replacement costs as determined by an independent valuer. Every 3 years a full revaluation is completed and in between those years a desktop valuation is completed.

2.3 Payables

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
2.3A: Suppliers		
Trade creditors and accruals	7,913	2,889
Total suppliers	7,913	2,889
2.3B: Other payables		
Contract liabilities from contracts with customers	10,977	10,901
National Sea Simulator construction and operational expenses funding	17,768	22,177
Total other payables	28,745	33,078

The contract liabilities are associated with research service contracts.
Refer Note 2.1B for information relating to contract assets.

Accounting Policy

Unearned income

Unearned income classified as other payables is recognised for payments received for services that are not yet fully performed. This is measured in accordance with the accounting policy in Note 1.2A for own-source revenue.

2.3B: Leases

Lease liabilities	763	857
Total leases	763	857

Total cash outflow for leases for the year ended 30 June 2024 was \$113,816 (2023: \$131,468).

AIMS in its capacity as lessee has significant leasing arrangements at Port of Townsville for vessel berthing facilities. The lease has a monthly amount payable with annual CPI inflator clauses over 25 years. AIMS extended the storage facility lease for a further two years to store items associated with the Sea Simulator facility.

Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows

Within one year	121	141
Between one to five years	246	277
More than five years	498	562
Total leases	865	980

The above lease disclosure should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 2.2.

Accounting Policy

For all new contracts entered into, AIMS considers whether the contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'. Once it has been determined that a contract is, or contains a lease, the lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, if that rate is readily determinable, or the Government's incremental borrowing rate. Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification to the lease. When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset or profit and loss depending on the nature of the reassessment or modification.

People and relationships

This section describes a range of employment and post employment benefits provided to our people and our relationships with other key people.

3.1 Employee Provisions

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Leave	16,262	13,605
Total employee provisions	16,262	13,605

Accounting Policy

Liabilities for 'short-term employee benefits' (as defined in AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*) and termination benefits expected within twelve months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

Other long term employee benefits are measured as net total of the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting period minus the fair value at the end of the reporting period of plan assets (if any) out of which the obligations are to be settled directly.

Leave

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of AIMS is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will be applied at the time the leave is taken, including AIMS's employer superannuation contribution rates to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

Superannuation

AIMS staff are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS), the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS), the PSS accumulation plan (PSSap), or other superannuation funds held outside the Australian Government.

The CSS and PSS are defined benefit schemes for the Australian Government. All other schemes are defined (accumulated funds) contribution schemes.

The liability for defined benefits is recognised in the financial statements of the Australian Government and is settled by the Australian Government in due course. This liability is reported by the Department of Finance administered schedules and notes.

AIMS makes employer contributions to the employees' superannuation scheme at rates determined by an actuary to be sufficient to meet the current cost to the Government. AIMS accounts for contributions as if they were contributions to defined contribution plans.

The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions for the final fortnight of the year.

Accounting Judgements and Estimates

Leave provisions involve assumptions based on the expected tenure of existing staff, patterns of leave claims and payouts, future salary movements and future discount rates.

3.2: Key Management Personnel Remuneration

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) of the entity. AIPS has determined the Key Management Personnel during the reporting period to be Council members, CEO and Senior Management. Key management personnel remuneration is reported below.

	2024	2023
Short term employee benefits	\$'000	\$'000
Post-employment benefits	2,738	2,560
Other long term employee benefits	378	333
Termination benefits	1	90
	14	-
Total key management personnel remuneration expenses*	3,131	2,983

Name & Position title	Short-term benefits		Post-employment benefits		Other long term benefits		Termination benefits	Total remuneration
	Base Salary	Other benefits and allowances	Superannuation contributions	Long service leave				
Dr Elizabeth Woods OAM - Chairperson*	55,897	-	8,633	-	-	-	64,530	
Ms Patricia Kelly FSM - Council and Audit Committee member*	27,710	-	4,157	-	-	-	31,867	
Dr Thomas Barlow - Council member* (ceased 31/12/2023)	13,964	-	3,900	-	-	-	17,864	
Dr Erika Teichner - Council member*	27,963	-	3,926	-	-	-	31,879	
Professor Simon Riggs - Council member*	32,806	-	-	-	-	-	32,806	
Mr Stephen Dunfield - Council member* (commenced 1/3/12/2023)	15,403	-	2,261	-	-	-	17,664	
Professor Peter Stureborg - Council member* (commenced 01/01/2024)	13,999	-	2,045	-	-	-	16,044	
Dr Paul Handisy - CEO and Council member* (ceased 01/12/2023) ¹	38,968	-	16,229	-	(69,649)	-	(852)	
Professor Selma Stead - CEO and Council member* (commenced 01/02/2024)	205,959	-	10,536	-	-	-	216,497	
Mr David Mead - Executive Director Strategic Development	312,203	-	60,675	-	12,853	-	385,731	
Mr Basil Alyck - Chief Finance Officer*	424,706	-	27,389	-	15,475	-	467,580	
Ms Justine Bolton - Acting Chief Finance Officer (from 31/07/2023 to 31/01/2024)	101,532	-	15,645	-	-	-	117,177	
Dr Richard Bereman - Chief Operating Officer*	276,601	-	54,508	-	3,899	-	335,008	
Dr Claire Striehn - Research Program Director	210,594	-	32,436	-	11,334	-	287,131	
Dr Lee Bay - Research Program Director	200,364	-	32,673	-	11,485	-	274,265	
Dr Karen Miller - Research Program Director	195,856	-	32,705	-	7,826	-	266,193	
Dr David Wachenfeld - Research Program Director	197,721	-	14,179	-	3,537	-	258,177	
Dr Katherine Christopfer - Director, Data Science and Research Services*	268,634	-	38,016	-	4,655	-	311,307	
Total	2,620,908	117,653	378,480	1,425	13,597	-	3,131,413	

* denotes those paid under Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination (No.2) 2023.

† denotes staff paid under Remuneration Tribunal (Principle Executive Officers - Classification Structure and Terms and Conditions Determination 2023.

‡ denotes staff paid through individual Workplace Agreements.

§ All other KMP are paid with accordance to AIMS Enterprise Agreement.

The total number of key management personnel that are included in the above table are 18 individuals (2023: 16 individuals). All members in the table were a Key Management Personnel for the financial year except where noted.

¹ The above key management personnel remuneration excludes the remuneration and other benefits of the Portfolio Minister. The Portfolio Minister's remuneration and other benefits are set by the Remuneration Tribunal and are not paid by AIMS.

² Dr Handisy ceased actively on 30/07/2023 and was on approved leave prior to his separation on 01/12/2023.

³ Invoices received from James Cook University in 2022/23 and 2023/24 invoice included 16.5% oncosts of which credit notes were received in August 2024 (2024 \$4,646 and 2023 \$4,460).

Remuneration of Senior Executives

All AIMS Senior Executives are captured within the Key Management Personnel (above).

Other highly paid staff - non-Key Management Personnel

Total remuneration Band	# highly paid staff	Short-term benefits		Post-employment benefits		Other long term benefits		Total Remuneration
		Average base Salary	Average other benefits and allowances	Average superannuation contributions	Average long service leave	Average total remuneration		
\$250,000 - \$270,000	1	203,501	14,254	35,207	7,420	280,382		
\$270,001 - \$295,000	1	273,067	23,650	30,380	7,294	274,397		
\$295,001 - \$320,000	1	269,487	-	34,871	6,776	311,134		
Total	1	689,035	37,910	100,458	21,490	845,913		

3.3 Related Party Disclosures

Related party relationships

AIMS is a Commonwealth controlled entity. Related parties to AIMS are Board members, Executive and Senior Management, the Portfolio Minister, and other Australian Government entities.

Transactions with related parties

Given the breadth of Government activities, related parties may transact with the Government sector in the same capacity as ordinary citizens. Such transactions include the payment or refund of taxes, receipt of Medicare rebate or Higher Education loans. These transactions have not been separately included in this note.

Details of transactions between key management personnel and related parties during the year for the purchase of science services were:

	2024	2023
	\$,000	\$
James Cook University	1,422	1,801
University of Western Australia	867	909
Total	2,289	2,710

Details of transactions between key management personnel and related parties during the year for the rendering of science services were:

	2024	2023
	\$,000	\$
Great Barrier Reef Foundation	5,201	4,699
University of Tasmania	3,485	1,832
Total	8,686	6,531

There were no other transactions with related entities during the year.

Managing Uncertainties

This section analyses how the Australian Institute of Marine Science manages financial risks within its operating environment.

4.1 Contingent Assets and Liabilities

Contingent assets

	2024	2023
	\$,000	\$
Balance from previous period	1,081	-
New contingent assets recognised	61	1,081
Rights expired	(32)	-
Total	1,110	1,081

Quantifiable Contingencies

AIMS holds performance guarantees of \$1.110m (2023: \$1.081m). Performance guarantees include Bank guarantees in relation to the construction of new and refurbishment of AIMS' buildings and facilities.

Unquantifiable Contingencies

AIMS has a 25 year lease on a berthing facility with Port of Townsville. At the expiry of the lease AIMS is required to carry out its own cost remediation work necessary to return the level of contamination in the leased land to a level as prescribed by Assessment and Management of Containment Land in Queensland (May 1998). AIMS is unable to reliably estimate the cost of any future remediation.

Accounting Policy

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the statement of financial position but are reported in the relevant schedules and notes. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of a liability or asset or represent an asset or liability in respect of which the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are disclosed when settlement is greater than remote.

Accounting Judgements and Estimates

AIMS does not hold any or transport dangerous goods and/or chemicals at the Port of Townsville property and we are required to formally assess the property every 5 years for contamination by an independent environmental assessor therefore our estimate is that there will be no contamination of the Townsville Port land over the lease period and we will not be required to complete any remediation work at the end of the lease.

4.2 Financial Instruments

	2024 \$,000	2023 \$
4.2: Categories of Financial Instruments		
Financial Assets at amortised cost		
Cash and cash equivalents	22,417	33,009
Other investments	114,000	60,000
Trade and other receivables	13,424	13,109
Total financial assets at amortised cost	149,841	106,118
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Suppliers	7,913	2,889
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	7,913	2,889

Accounting Policy*Financial Assets*

AIMS classifies its financial assets measured at amortised cost as per AASB 9 Financial Instruments.

The classification depends on both the AIMS's business model for managing the financial assets and contractual cash flow characteristics at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised when the AIMS becomes a party to the contract and, as a consequence, has a legal right to receive or a legal obligation to pay cash and derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash from the financial asset expire or are transferred upon trade date.

Impairment of Financial Assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period based on Expected Credit Losses, using the general approach which measures the loss allowance based on an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses where risk has significantly increased, or an amount equal to 12-month expected credit losses if risk has not increased.

The simplified approach for trade, contract and lease receivables is used. This approach always measures the loss allowance as the amount equal to the lifetime expected credit losses.

A write-off constitutes a derecognition event where the write-off directly reduces the gross carrying amount of the financial asset.

Financial Assets at amortised cost

Financial assets included in this category need to meet two criteria:

1. the financial asset is held in order to collect the contractual cash flows; and
2. the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest (SPPI) on the principal outstanding amount.

Amortised cost is determined using the effective interest rate method.

Effective interest rate

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis for financial assets that are recognised at amortised cost.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or other financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Financial liabilities at amortised cost

Financial liabilities, including borrowings, are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. These liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective interest basis.

Suppliers and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (irrespective of having been invoiced).

4.3 Fair Value Measurements

Accounting Policy

AIMS deems transfers between levels of the fair value hierarchy to have occurred at 30 June 2024.

4.3: Fair Value Measurements

	Fair value measurements at the end of the reporting period	
	2024 \$,000	2023 \$,000
Non-financial assets		
Buildings	119,336	111,912
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	27,835	22,652
Ships, launches & vessels	20,907	20,019
Computer equipment	3,309	2,427
Vehicles	2,859	1,145
Office equipment	77	43
Total non-financial assets	174,322	158,198

1. The following valuation techniques were used:

Cost approach: based on the amount required to replace the service potential of an asset

Market approach: based on market transactions involving identical or similar assets or liabilities

AIMS procured valuation services from Pickles Valuation Services (PVS) and relied on valuation models provided by PVS. PVS re-tests the valuation model every 12 months and has provided written assurance to AIMS that the model developed is compliant with AASB 13.

Other Information

5.1 Current / non-current distinction for assets and liabilities

	2024	2023
	\$,000	\$,000
Assets expected to be recovered in:		
No more than 12 months		
Cash and cash equivalents	22,417	33,009
Trade and other receivables	13,424	13,109
Other investments	114,000	60,000
Inventory	373	254
Prepayments	903	815
Total no more than 12 months	151,117	107,187
More than 12 months		
Buildings	119,336	111,912
Infrastructure, plant & equipment	27,835	22,652
Computer equipment	2,579	2,427
Computer software	730	1,036
Vehicles	2,859	1,145
Office Equipment	77	43
Ships, Launches and vessel	20,907	20,019
Prepayments	2,021	2,141
Total more than 12 months	176,343	161,375
Total assets	327,460	268,562
Liabilities expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months		
Suppliers	7,913	2,889
Salaries and wages	1,646	1,223
Other payables	20,685	30,938
Leases	116	124
Employee provisions	13,902	12,286
Total no more than 12 months	44,262	47,460
More than 12 months		
Other payables	8,060	2,140
Leases	647	733
Make good provision	17	17
Employee provisions	2,360	1,319
Total more than 12 months	11,084	4,209
Total Liabilities	55,346	51,669

5.2 Management of Great Barrier Reef Foundation Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program funds

From 1 July 2020, AIMS is administering the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) funds on behalf of the RRAP collaboration partnership. AIMS has created separate bank accounts to manage these funds and the balance of these account as at 30 June 2024 is \$14,276,896 (2023: \$10,522,586). These funds do not form part of these accounts.

AIMS received \$20m (2023: \$0) in appropriation funding that was subsequently paid as a contractor expense to the RRAP collaboration partnership as the Institute's portion for 2023/24 activities of the partnership. This funding represents approximately 60% of all the funding received by the RRAP Collaboration partnership which is then used to pay for the services of the various R&D partners including the Institute. The Institute recognised revenue for providing services to the partnership 2024 \$5,661,717 (2023: \$0). As this revenue was from the \$20m appropriation funding, elimination entries were processed for the 2024 financial statements.

Supplementary Financial Information (Unaudited)

SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION (UNAUDITED)
NOTE 1:
Revenue comparison

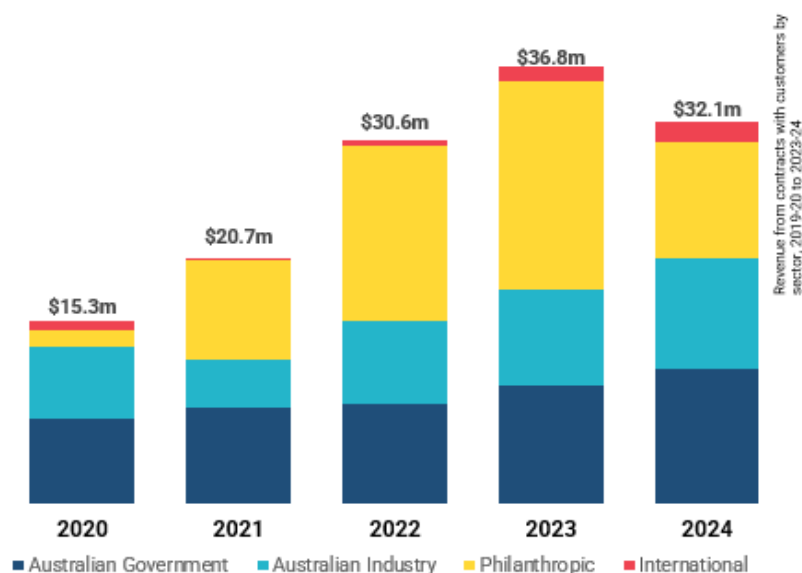
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Appropriation revenue					
Operating	36,752	37,197	37,527	54,905	91,519
Asset replacement	8,021	8,021	8,021	8,021	8,333
Total appropriation revenue	44,773	45,218	45,548	62,926	99,852
Non-appropriation revenue					
Revenue from contracts with customers ¹	15,291	20,669	30,612	36,767	32,094
NSS construction and operating funding	-	233	2,435	11,485	22,951
Interest	675	358	277	3,347	8,981
Other revenue	924	452	1,124	1,017	1,246
Total non-appropriation revenue	16,890	21,712	34,448	52,616	65,272
Total revenue	61,663	66,930	79,996	115,542	165,124
Non-appropriation ratio ²	27%	32%	43%	46%	40%

¹Revenue from contracts with customers is for AIMS research services (see note 1.2A).

²Non-appropriation ratio is percentage non-appropriation revenue of total revenue.

NOTE 2:
Revenue from contracts with customers by sector

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Australian Government	7,077	8,074	8,389	9,876	11,240
Australian Industry	6,065	4,037	6,997	8,045	9,295
Philanthropic	1,422	8,409	14,706	17,669	9,806
International	727	149	520	1,177	1,753
	15,291	20,669	30,612	36,767	32,094
Revenue from Government	44.8	45.2	45.5	62.9	99.9
Own-source income	16.9	21.7	34.4	52.6	65.3
Australian sources	14,564	20,520	30,092	35,590	30,341



Part 6: Appendices and Indexes

Appendix A: Science Publications

AIMS' complete bibliography for 2023-24 is available at <https://www.aims.gov.au/information-centre/corporate-publications/annual-reports>

Appendix B: External Committees and Non-Government Organisations and Positions

A list of external committees and non-government organisations and positions in which AIMS participates is available at <https://www.aims.gov.au/information-centre/corporate-publications/annual-reports>

Indexes

Acronyms

Acronym	Term in full
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIMS	Australian Institute of Marine Science
AIMS Act	Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ASSETS	Aboriginal Summer School for Excellence in Technology and Science
ATSIMS	Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in Marine Science
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Finance Officer
pCO ₂	partial pressure of carbon dioxide
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
FOI	Freedom of Information
FOI Act	Freedom of Information Act 1982
FRR	Financial Reporting Rule
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FY	Financial Year
GBR	Great Barrier Reef
GBRF	Great Barrier Reef Foundation
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
GHHP	Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership
GST	Goods and Services Tax
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
IMOS	Integrated Marine Observing System
IOMRC	Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre
IPS	Information Publication Scheme
JCU	James Cook University
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LTMP	Long-Term Monitoring Program

Acronym	Term in full
MMP	Marine Monitoring Program
MP	Member of Parliament
NCRIS	National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy
NESP	National Environmental Science Program
NMSC	National Marine Science Committee
NOAA	US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOPSEMA	National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority
NPS	Net Promoter Score
OAIC	Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statement
PGPA Act	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013
PMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
RRAP	Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program
RIMReP	Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program
RV	Research Vessel
SeaSim	National Sea Simulator
UQ	University of Queensland
UWA	The University of Western Australia
WA	Western Australia
WAMSI	Western Australian Marine Science Institution
WHS Act	Work Health and Safety Act

List of Requirements

AIMS' requirement for annual reporting is outlined under s. 7 (2) of the AIMS Act, which states that the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 applies to the Institute. That Act deals with matters relating to corporate Commonwealth entities, including reporting and the use and management of public resources.

The list below shows AIMS' compliance with annual report information requirements for corporate Commonwealth entities as stipulated under s. 46 of Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act).

The annual financial statements (Part 5 of this report) were prepared in accordance with ss. 42 and 43 of the PGPA Act and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015.

This annual report complies with parliamentary standards of presentation and printing and uses plain English and clear design.

PGPA Rule Reference	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
17BE	Contents of annual report		
17BE(a)	Part 1 Overview - About AIMS Part 3 Management and Accountability - Role and Legislation	Details of the legislation establishing the body	Mandatory
17BE(b)(i)	Part 3 Management and Accountability - Role and Legislation	A summary of the objects and functions of the entity as set out in legislation	Mandatory
17BE(b)(ii)	Part 3 Management and Accountability - Role and Legislation	The purposes of the entity as included in the entity's corporate plan for the reporting period	Mandatory
17BE(c)	Part 3 Management and Accountability - Responsible Minister	The names of the persons holding the position of responsible Minister or responsible Ministers during the reporting period, and the titles of those responsible Ministers	Mandatory
17BE(d)	Part 3 Management and Accountability - Government Engagement	Directions given to the entity by the Minister under an Act or instrument during the reporting period	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(e)	Part 3 Management and Accountability - Government Engagement	Any government policy order that applied in relation to the entity during the reporting period under section 22 of the Act	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(f)	Part 3 Management and Accountability - Government Engagement	Particulars of non-compliance with: (a) a direction given to the entity by the Minister under an Act or instrument during the reporting period; or (b) a government policy order that applied in relation to the entity during the reporting period under section 22 of the Act	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(g)	Part 2 Performance Statements	Annual performance statements in accordance with paragraph 39(1)(b) of the Act and section 16F of the rule	Mandatory
17BE(h), 17BE(i)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Duty to inform & Ministerial issues Fraud control	A statement of significant issues reported to the Minister under paragraph 19(1)(e) of the Act that relates to non compliance with finance law and action taken to remedy non compliance	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(j)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Governance, AIMS Council	Information on the accountable authority, or each member of the accountable authority, of the entity during the reporting period	Mandatory

PGPA Rule Reference	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
17BE	Contents of annual report		
17BE(k)	Part 4 Our People Organisational Structure	Outline of the organisational structure of the entity (including any subsidiaries of the entity)	Mandatory
17BE(ka)	Part 4 Our People Staff	Statistics on the entity's employees on an ongoing and non ongoing basis, including the following: (a) statistics on full time employees; (b) statistics on part time employees; (c) statistics on gender; (d) statistics on staff location	Mandatory
17BE(l)	Part 1 Overview About AIMS	Outline of the location (whether or not in Australia) of major activities or facilities of the entity	Mandatory
17BE(m)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Corporate Governance	Information relating to the main corporate governance practices used by the entity during the reporting period	Mandatory
17BE(n), 17BE(o)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Related Parties Part 5 Financial Statements section 3.3	For transactions with a related Commonwealth entity or related company where the value of the transaction, or if there is more than one transaction, the aggregate of those transactions, is more than \$10,000 (inclusive of GST): (a) the decision making process undertaken by the accountable authority to approve the entity paying for a good or service from, or providing a grant to, the related Commonwealth entity or related company; and (b) the value of the transaction, or if there is more than one transaction, the number of transactions and the aggregate of value of the transactions	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(p)	Part 2 Performance Statements Results and Commentary on Performance	Any significant activities and changes that affected the operation or structure of the entity during the reporting period	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(q)	n/a	Particulars of judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals that may have a significant effect on the operations of the entity	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(r)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Public Accountability	Particulars of any reports on the entity given by: (a) the Auditor General (other than a report under section 43 of the Act); or (b) a Parliamentary Committee; or (c) the Commonwealth Ombudsman; or (d) the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(s)	n/a	An explanation of information not obtained from a subsidiary of the entity and the effect of not having the information on the annual report	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(t)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Indemnities and Insurance Premiums for Officers	Details of any indemnity that applied during the reporting period to the accountable authority, any member of the accountable authority or officer of the entity against a liability (including premiums paid, or agreed to be paid, for insurance against the authority, member or officer's liability for legal costs)	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(taa)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Governance, Audit Committee, AIMS Council	The following information about the audit committee for the entity: (a) a direct electronic address of the charter determining the functions of the audit committee; (b) the name of each member of the audit committee; (c) the qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience of each member of the audit committee;	Mandatory

PGPA Rule Reference	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
17BE	Contents of annual report		
		(d) information about each member's attendance at meetings of the audit committee; (e) the remuneration of each member of the audit committee	
17BE(ta)	Part 5 Financial Statements section 3.2	Information about executive remuneration	Mandatory

Performance Statement		
The accountable authority must include a copy of the annual performance statements in the entity's annual report that is tabled in the Parliament. The annual performance statements must: (a) provide information about the entity's performance in achieving its purposes; and (b) comply with any requirements prescribed by the rules.	s. 39(1) and (2)	Part 2 Performance Statements
The performance statement must include a statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> declaring that the performance statements are prepared for section 39(1)(a) of the PGPA Act and any other applicable legislation specifying the reporting period for which the performance statements are prepared declaring that, in the opinion of the accountable authority, the performance statements accurately present the entity's performance and comply with s. 39(2) of the PGPA Act. 	s. 16F(2)	Part 2 Performance Statements
The performance statement must include the results of the measurement and assessment of performance.	s. 16F(2)	Part 2 Performance Statements
The performance statement must include an analysis of the factors that contributed to the entity's performance, including any changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the entity's purpose, activities or organisational capacity; or the environment in which the entity operated that may have had a significant impact on performance. 	s. 16F(2)	Part 2 Performance Statements Results and Commentary on Performance

Financial statement		
The accountable authority must prepare annual financial statements and given to the Auditor-General.	s. 42(1)	Part 5 Financial Statements
The accountable authority must ensure that all the subsidiaries' financial statements are audited by the Auditor-General.	s. 44(2)	n/a
A copy of the financial statement and the Auditor-General's report must be included in the annual report.	s. 43(4)	Part 5 Financial Statements
The financial statement must comply with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015.	s. 42(2)(a)	Part 5 Financial Statements

Other requirements		
Statement of Expectations	Suggested practice	Part 2 Performance Statements Statement of Ministerial Expectations
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	EPBC Act Section 516A(6)	Part 4 Our People Environmental Performance
Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1997	EEO Act Section 9	Part 4 Our People Equal Opportunity and Workforce Diversity

Other requirements		
Work Health and Safety Act 2011	WHS Act Section 4(1)	Part 4 Our People Health and Safety
Privacy Act 1988		Part 3 Management and Accountability Privacy Act 1988
Freedom of Information Act 1982	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC)	Part 3 Management and Accountability Freedom of Information Act 1982
National Disability Strategy 2010–2020	PMC	Part 4 Our People Equal Opportunity and Workforce Diversity
Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013	PID Act	Part 3 Management and Accountability Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013
Fraud control		Part 3 Management and Accountability Fraud Control

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